HOW TO DRAW SCI-FI™

BEN DUNN

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Presented by Ben Dunn

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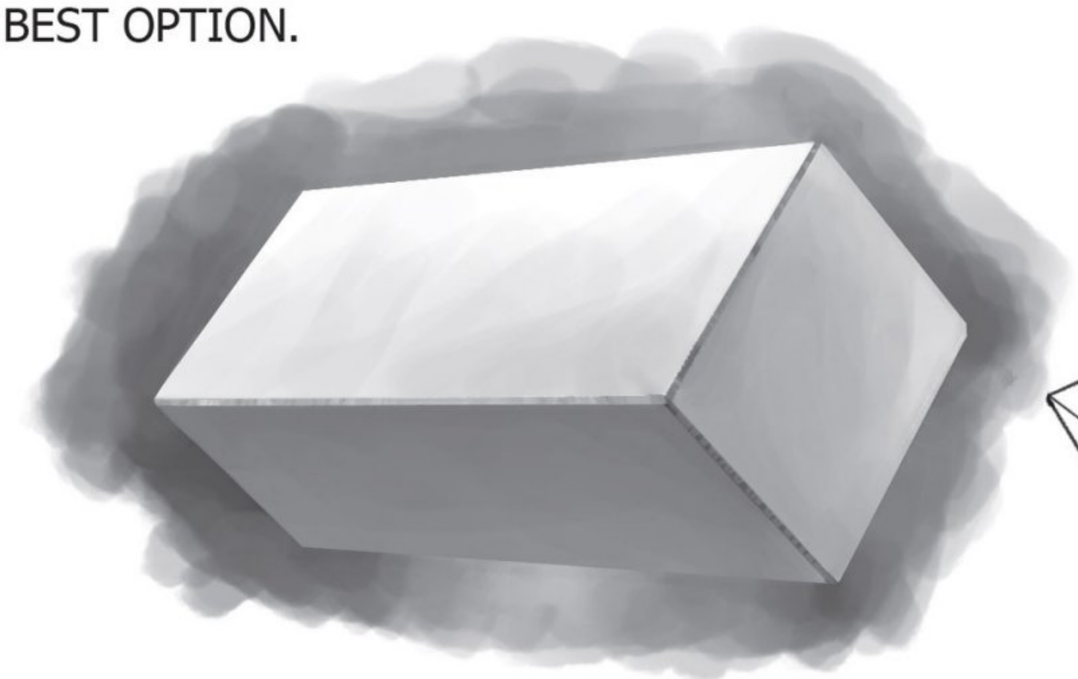
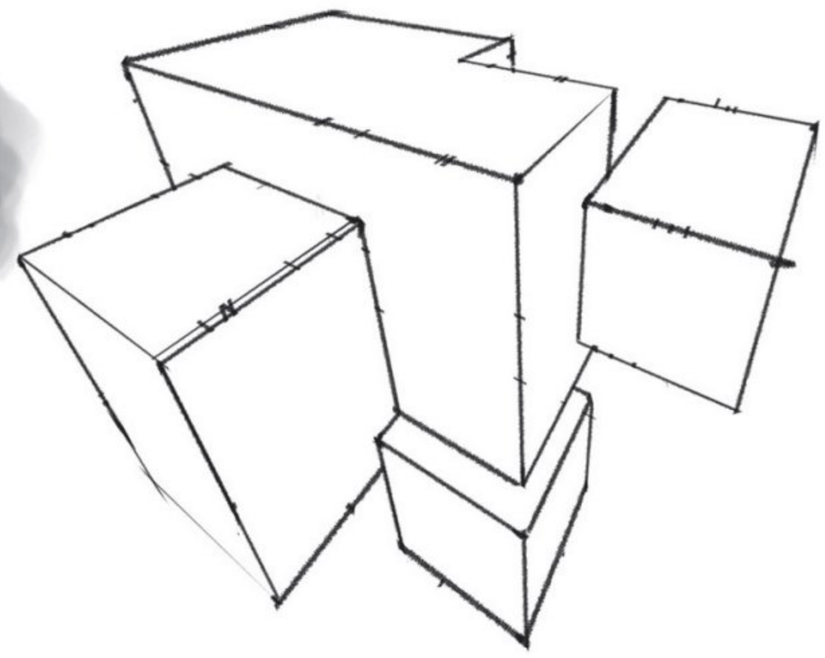
SHAPES

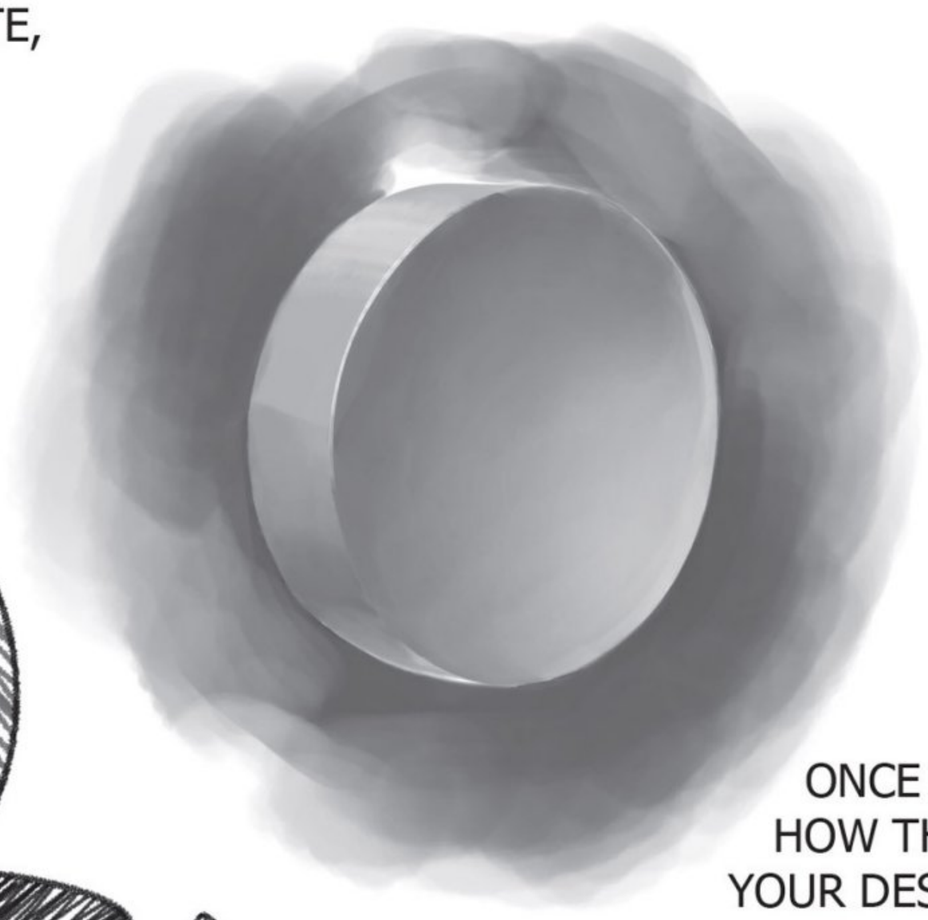
BASIC

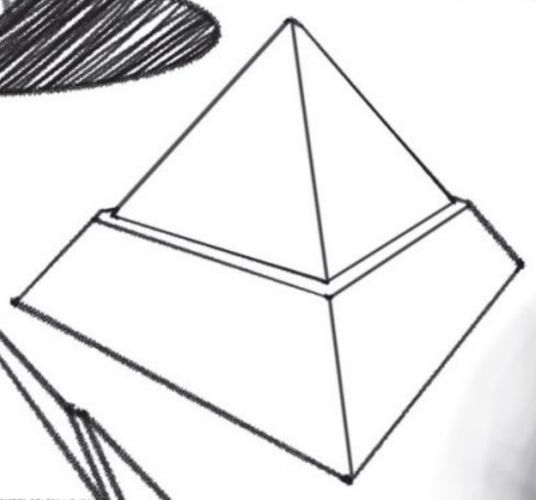
WHEN CREATING DESIGNS FOR SCI-FI, STARTING OFF WITH BASIC SHAPES IS YOUR BEST OPTION.



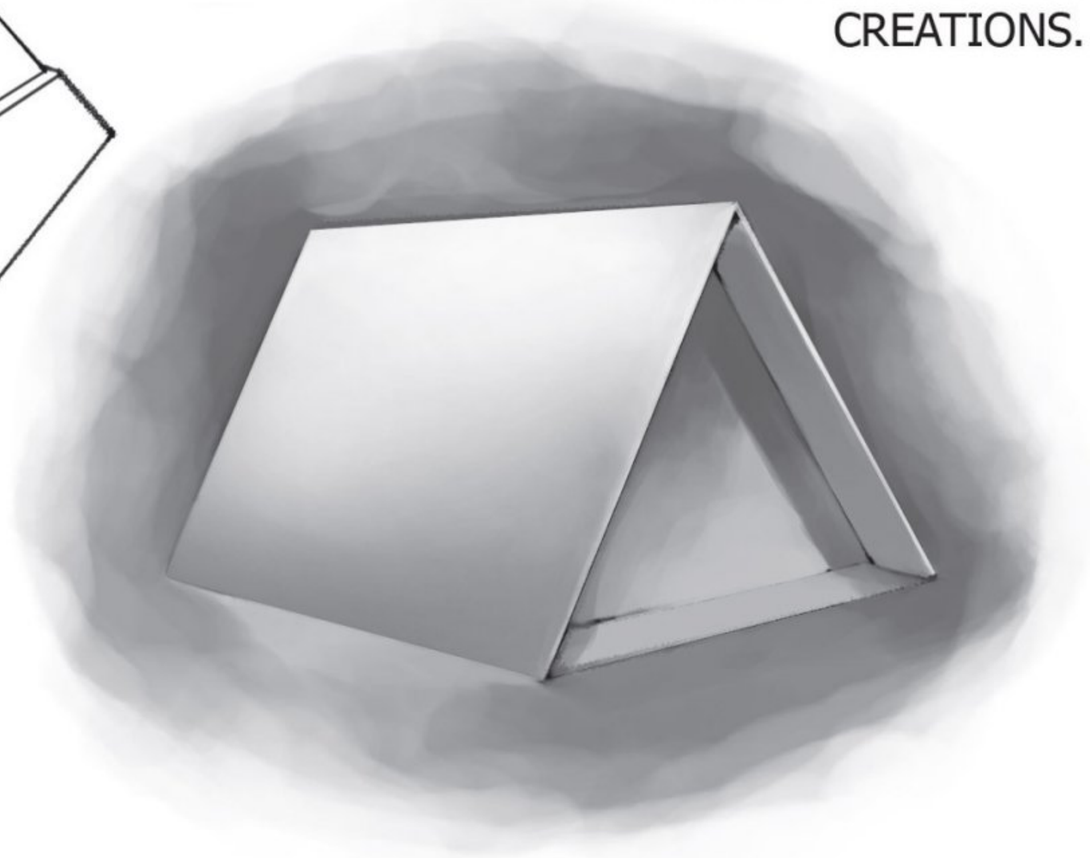


THESE BASIC SHAPES ARE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND, MANIPULATE, AND COMPOSE.



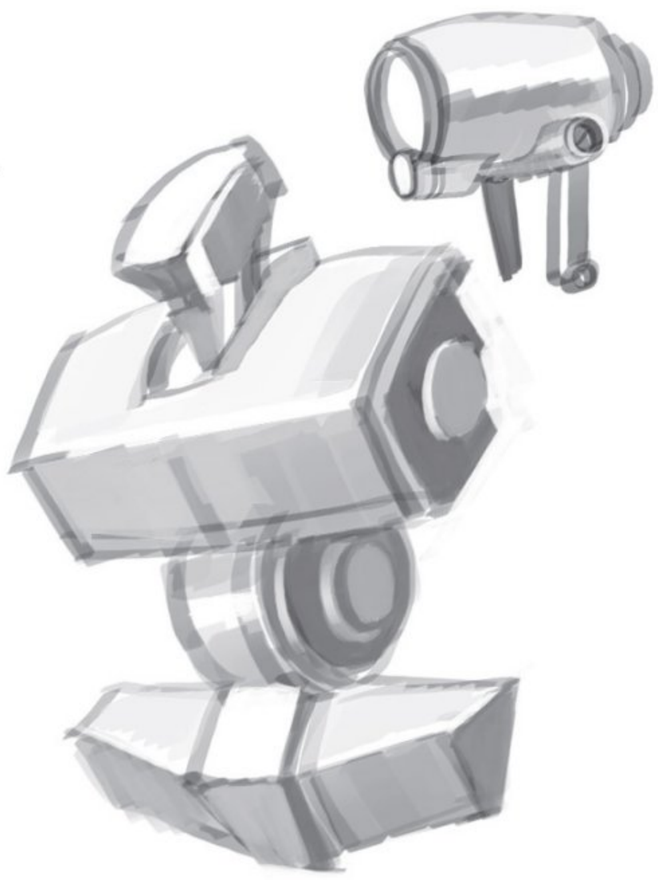


ONCE YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF HOW THESE SHAPES WORK IN YOUR DESIGNS, YOU CAN BEGIN TO BUILD OFF OF THEM AND MAKE MORE INTERESTING CREATIONS.

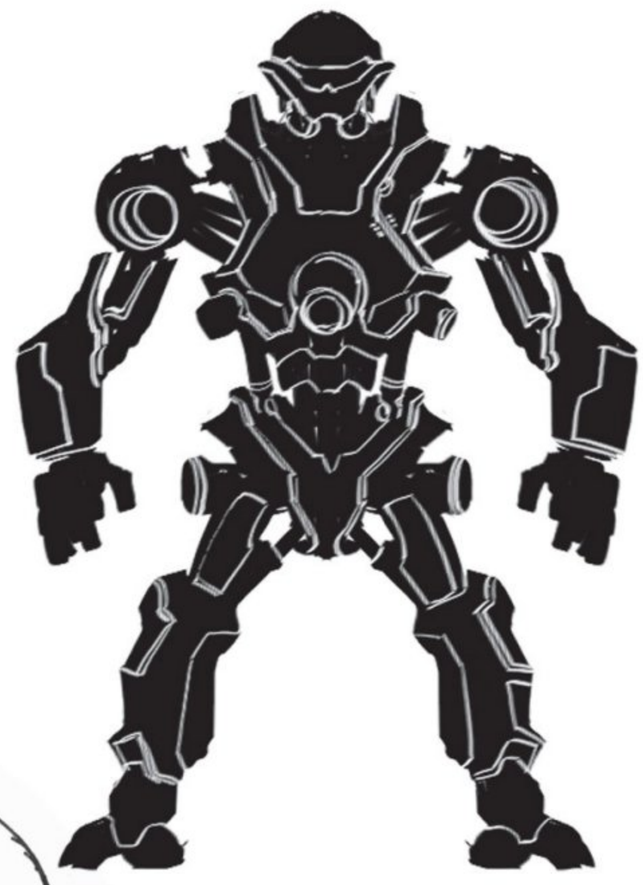


SHAPES

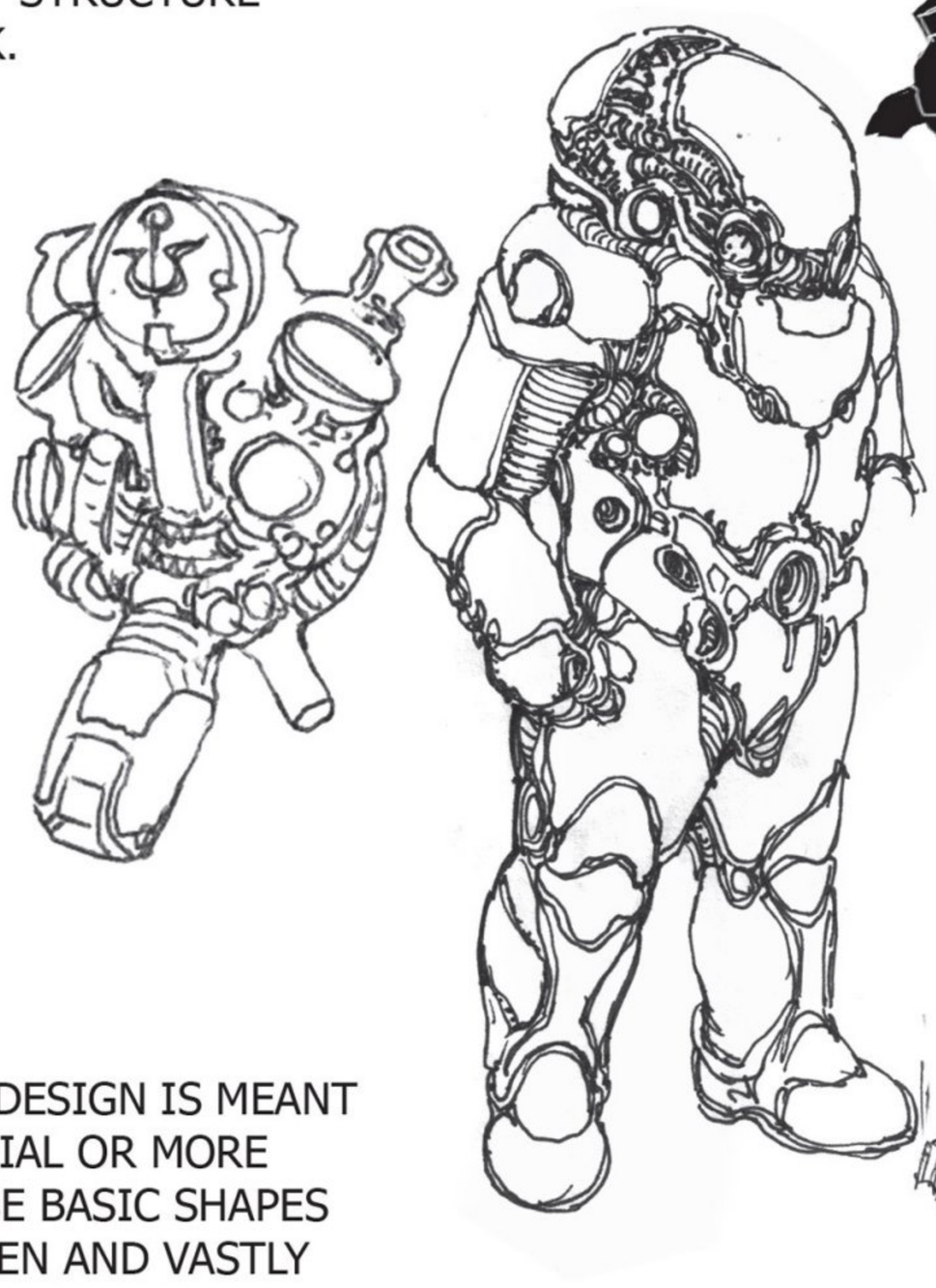
COMPOUND



ONE OF THE REASONS ARTISTS USE BASIC SHAPES IS THAT ONE KIND OF SHAPE WILL SUGGEST OTHERS, MAKING THE DESIGN FLOW MORE SMOOTHLY AND NATURALLY.



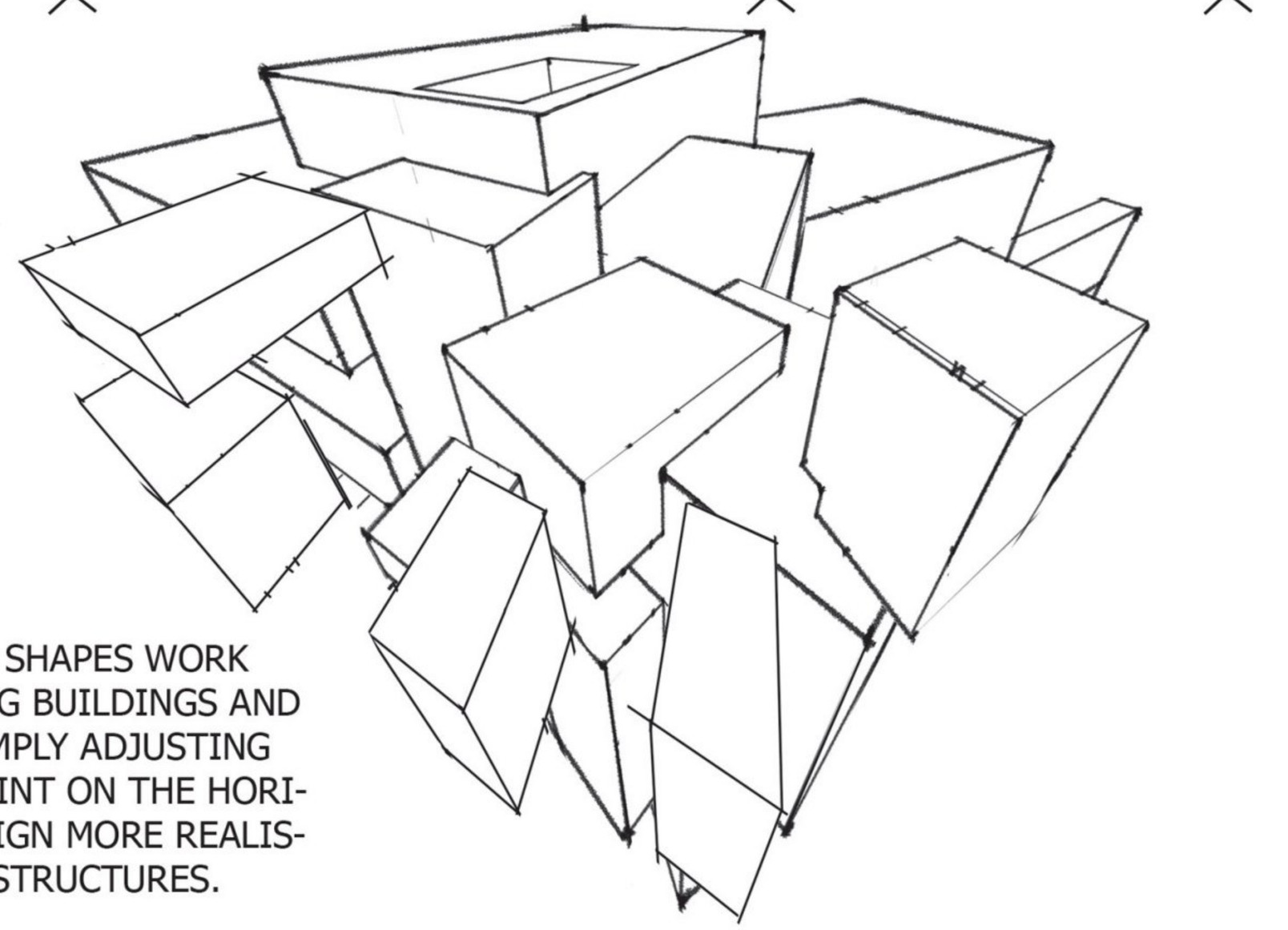
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT DRAWING STYLE IS USED. THE SHAPES WILL PRESENT THEMSELVES AND CREATE A REAL SENSE OF STRUCTURE IN YOUR WORK.



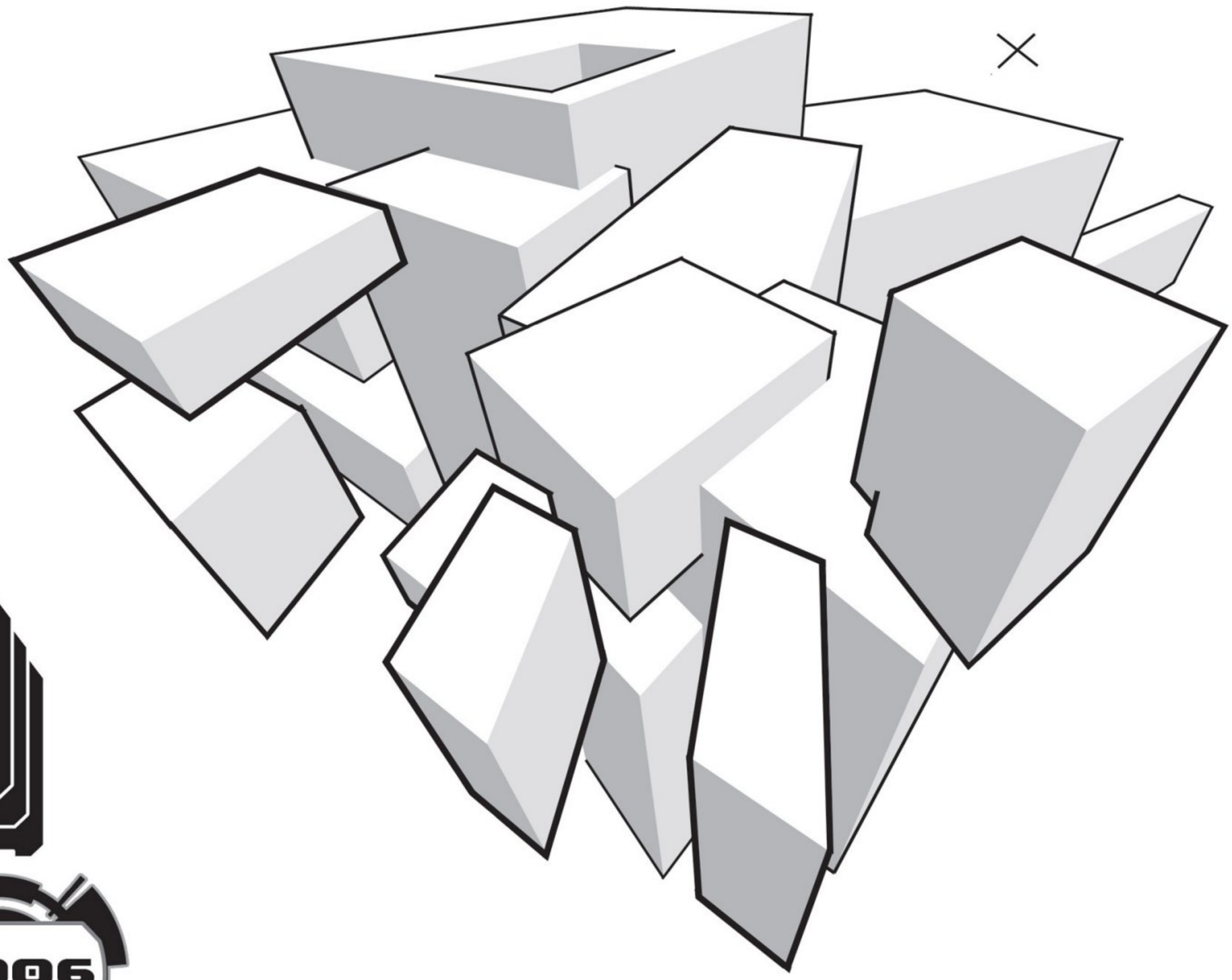
WHETHER THE DESIGN IS MEANT TO BE INDUSTRIAL OR MORE ORGANIC, THESE BASIC SHAPES CAN STRENGTHEN AND VASTLY IMPROVE YOUR DESIGNS.

SHAPES

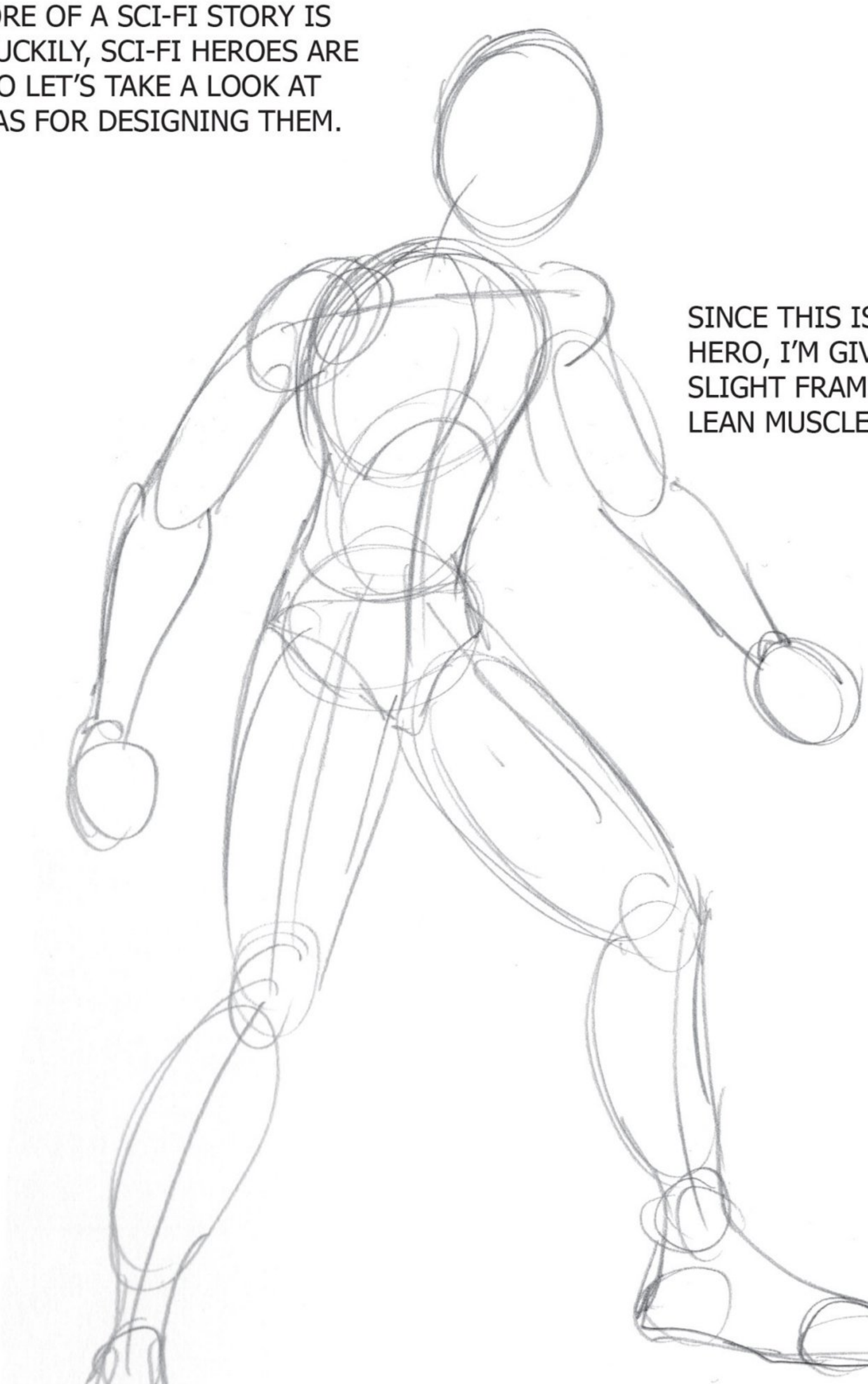
COMPOUND



OF COURSE, THESE SHAPES WORK WELL FOR CREATING BUILDINGS AND CITYSCAPES. BY SIMPLY ADJUSTING THE VANISHING POINT ON THE HORIZON, YOU CAN DESIGN MORE REALISTIC AND COMPLEX STRUCTURES.



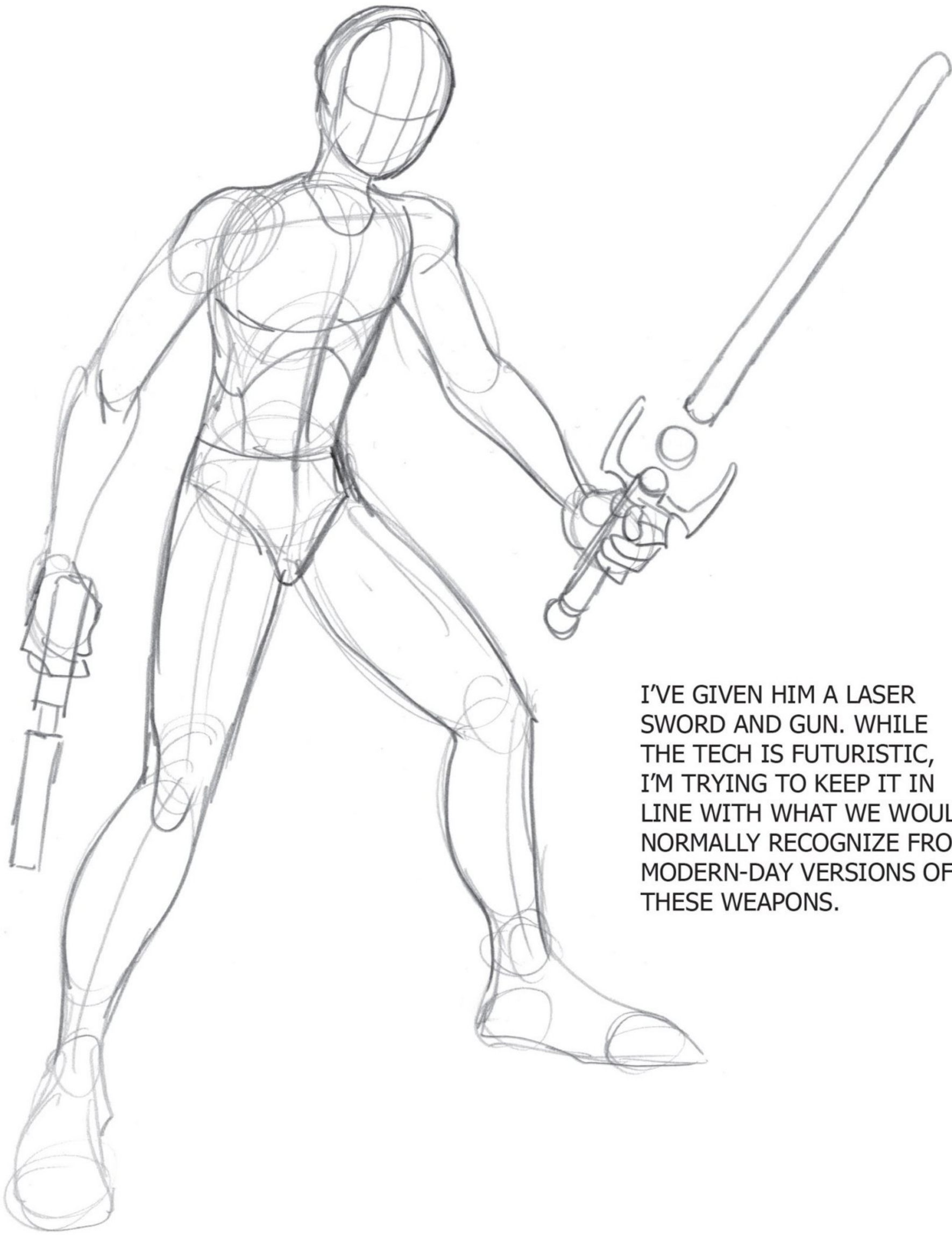
AT THE CORE OF A SCI-FI STORY IS A HERO. LUCKILY, SCI-FI HEROES ARE LEGION, SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME IDEAS FOR DESIGNING THEM.



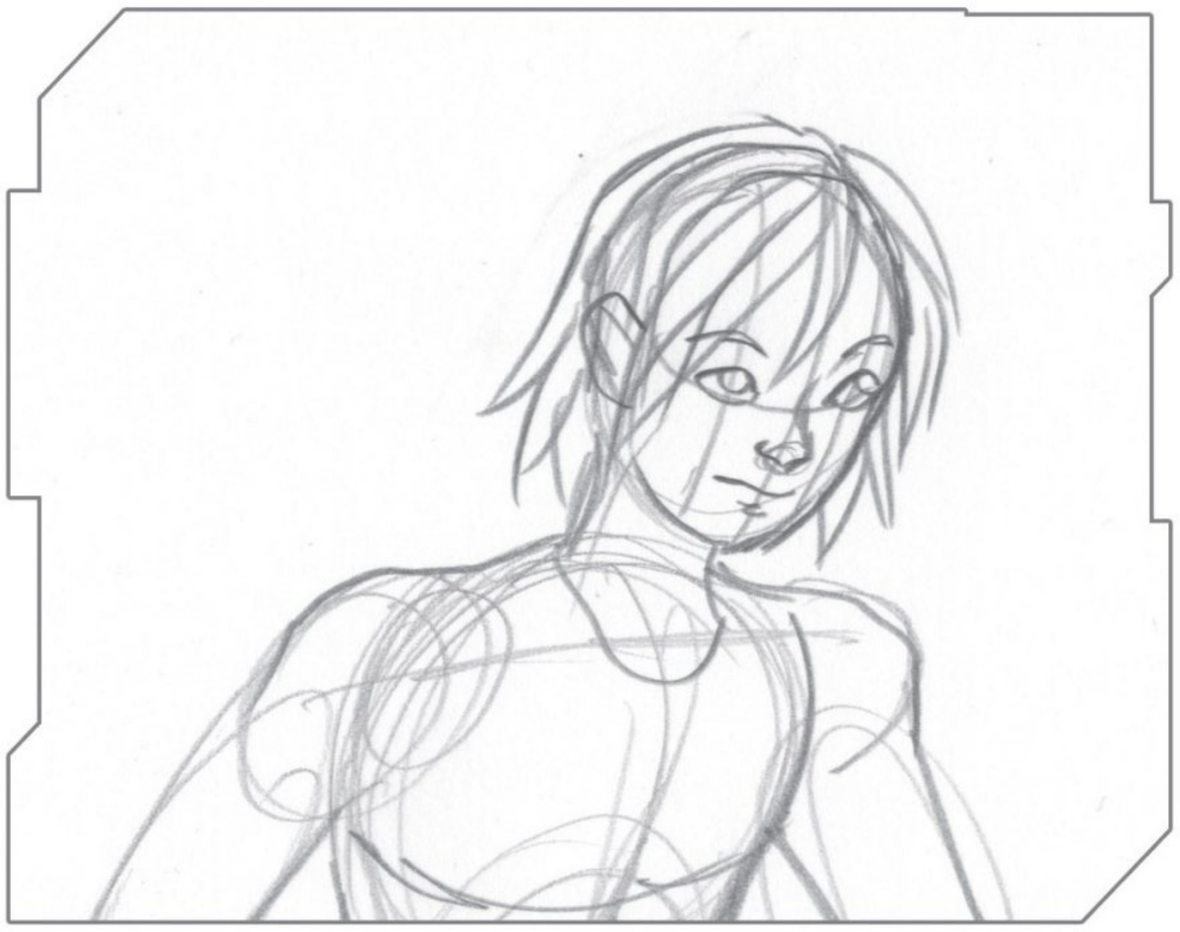
SINCE THIS IS A YOUNG HERO, I'M GIVING HIM A SLIGHT FRAME WITH LEAN MUSCLES.

I'VE STAGED HIM IN AN EAGER STANCE. HE'S READY FOR A FIGHT!

I'M GOING TO CONCENTRATE ON OUR HERO'S WEAPONS.



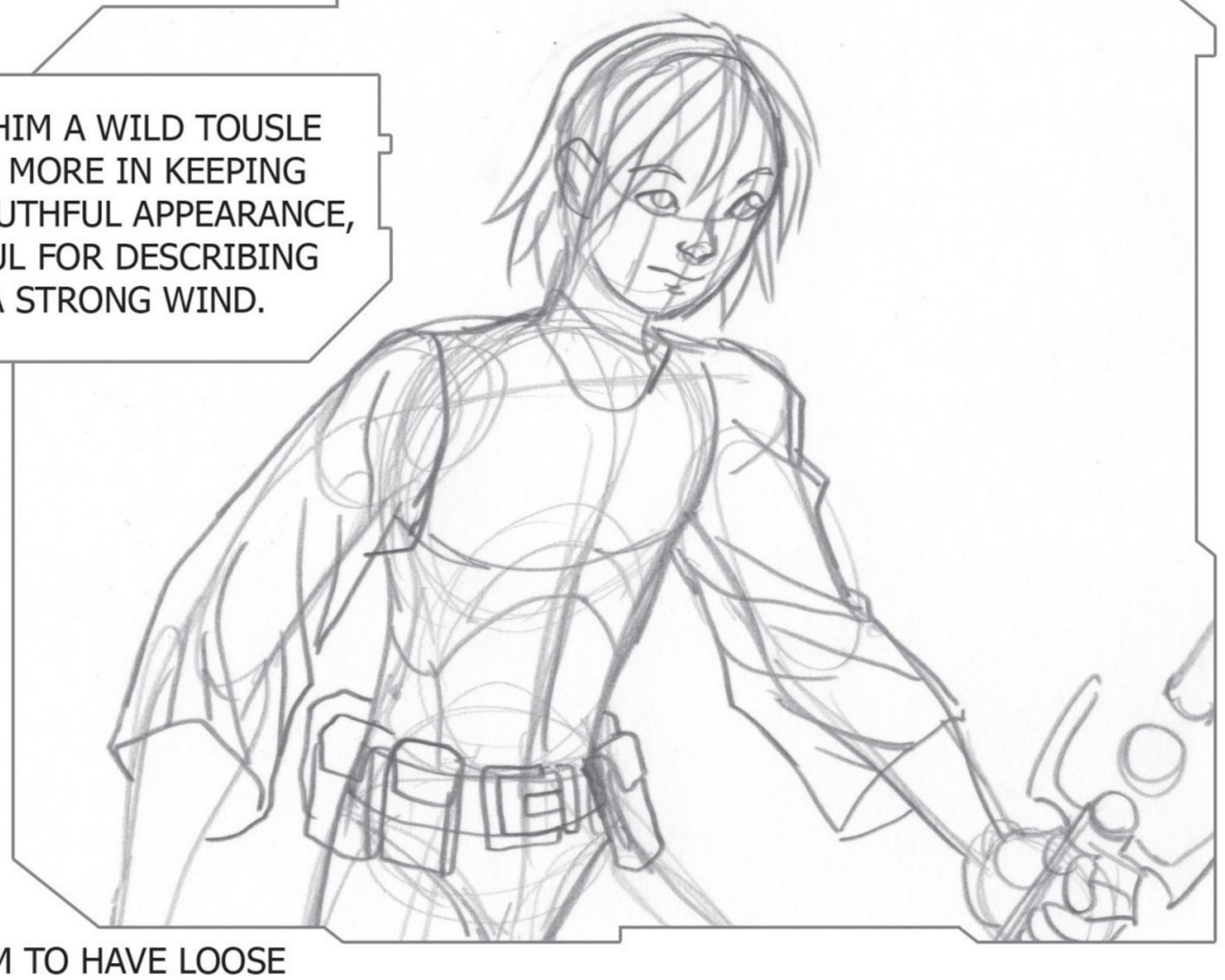
I'VE GIVEN HIM A LASER SWORD AND GUN. WHILE THE TECH IS FUTURISTIC, I'M TRYING TO KEEP IT IN LINE WITH WHAT WE WOULD NORMALLY RECOGNIZE FROM MODERN-DAY VERSIONS OF THESE WEAPONS.



I WANT THE HERO TO HAVE A MORE YOUTHFUL LOOK, YET TO BE TESTED BY THE FORCES HE'LL CONFRONT, AS OPPOSED TO THE APPEARANCE OF OLDER, MORE EXPERIENCED HEROES.

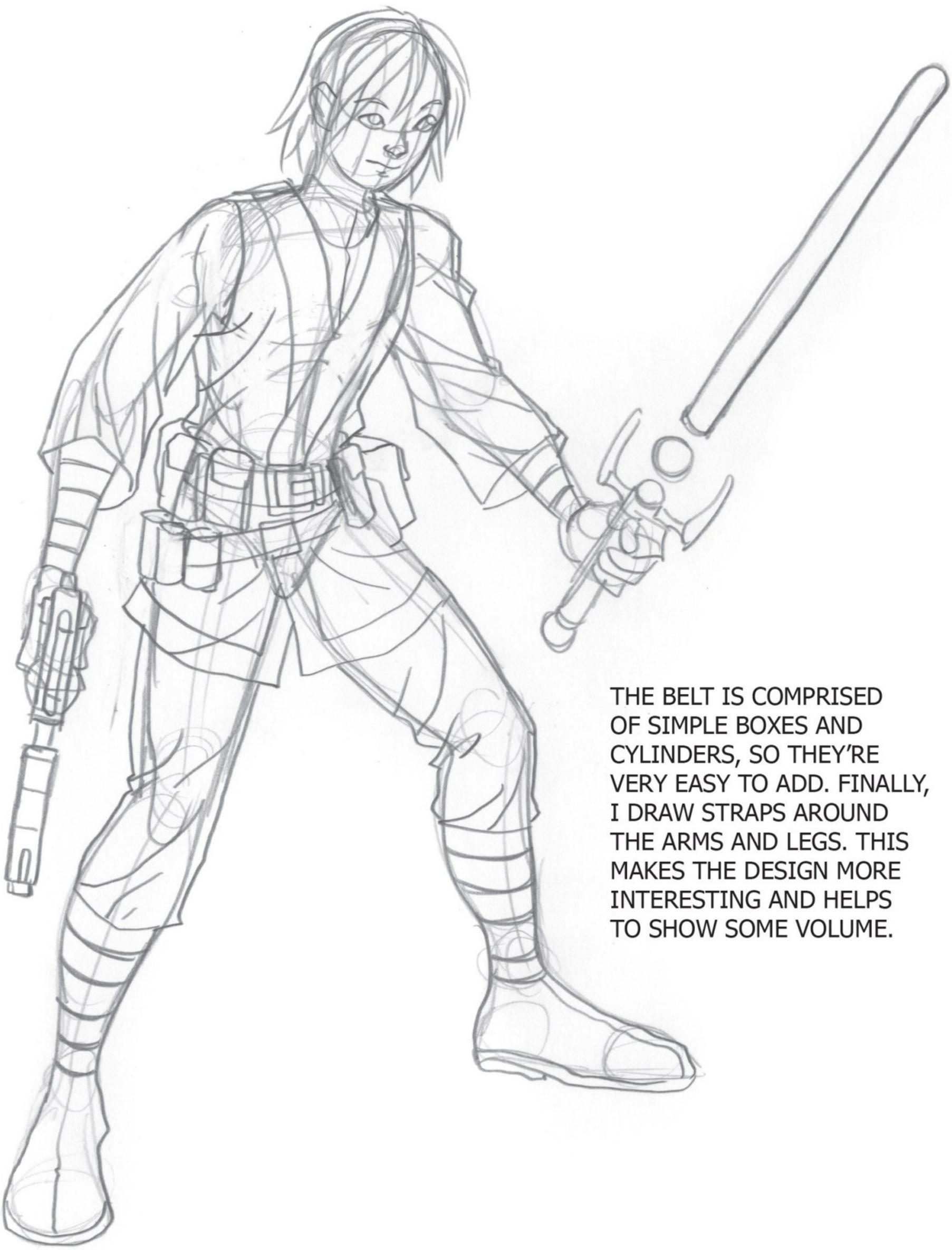
I GIVE HIM LARGER EYES, A SMALLER NOSE, SUBTLER CHEEK BONES, AND A SOFTER JAW LINE. DON'T WANT TO GO TOO FAR IN THIS DIRECTION, THOUGH; HE'S AT LEAST IN HIS TEENS—YOUNG, BUT NOT A CHILD.

I ALSO GIVE HIM A WILD TOUSLE OF HAIR. IT'S MORE IN KEEPING WITH HIS YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE, AND IS USEFUL FOR DESCRIBING MOTION OR A STRONG WIND.



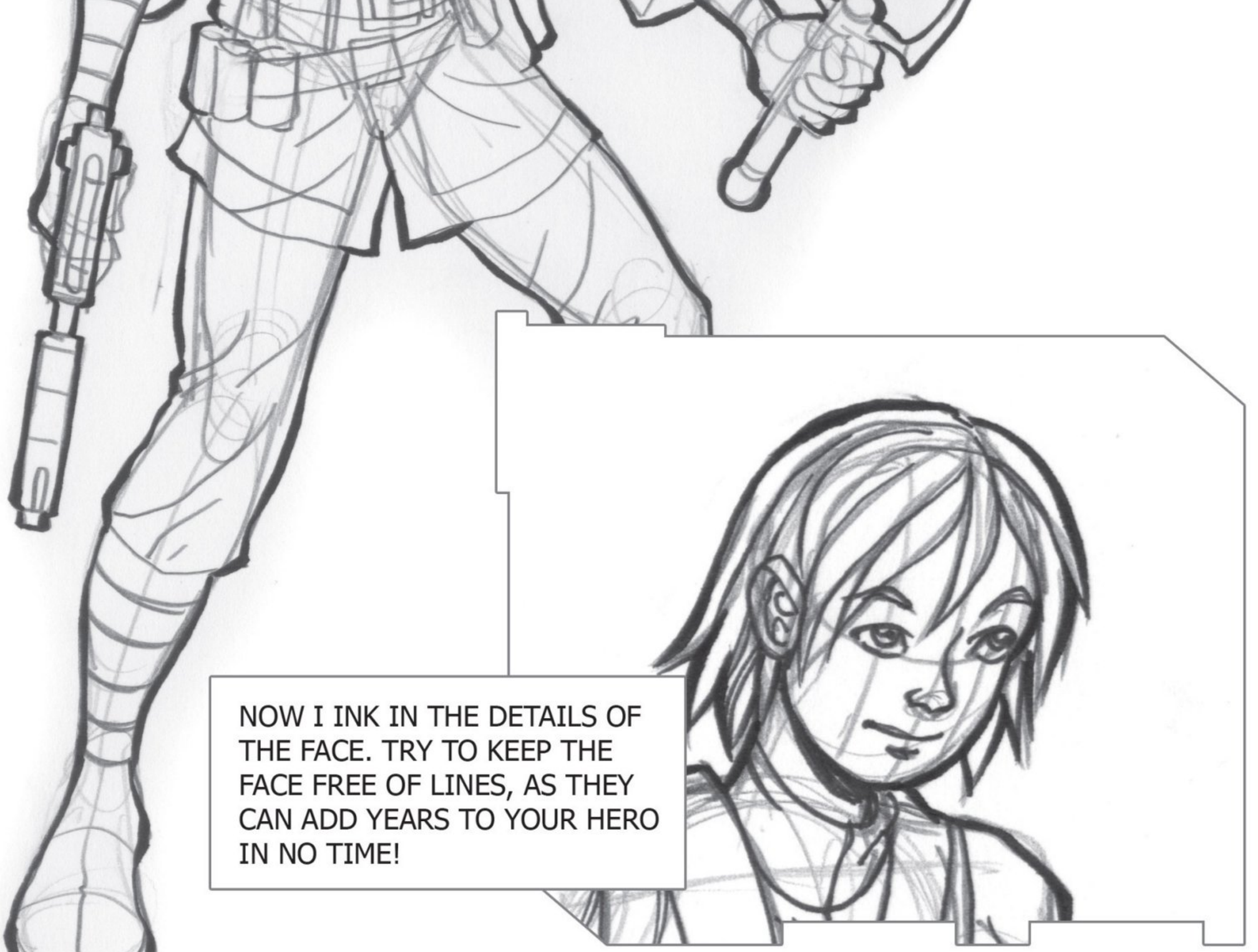
I'LL WANT HIM TO HAVE LOOSE CLOTHING THAT WILL LOOK GOOD IN MOTION AS WELL.

IS ANY HERO COMPLETE WITHOUT HIS TRUSTY UTILITY BELT?



THE BELT IS COMPRISED OF SIMPLE BOXES AND CYLINDERS, SO THEY'RE VERY EASY TO ADD. FINALLY, I DRAW STRAPS AROUND THE ARMS AND LEGS. THIS MAKES THE DESIGN MORE INTERESTING AND HELPS TO SHOW SOME VOLUME.

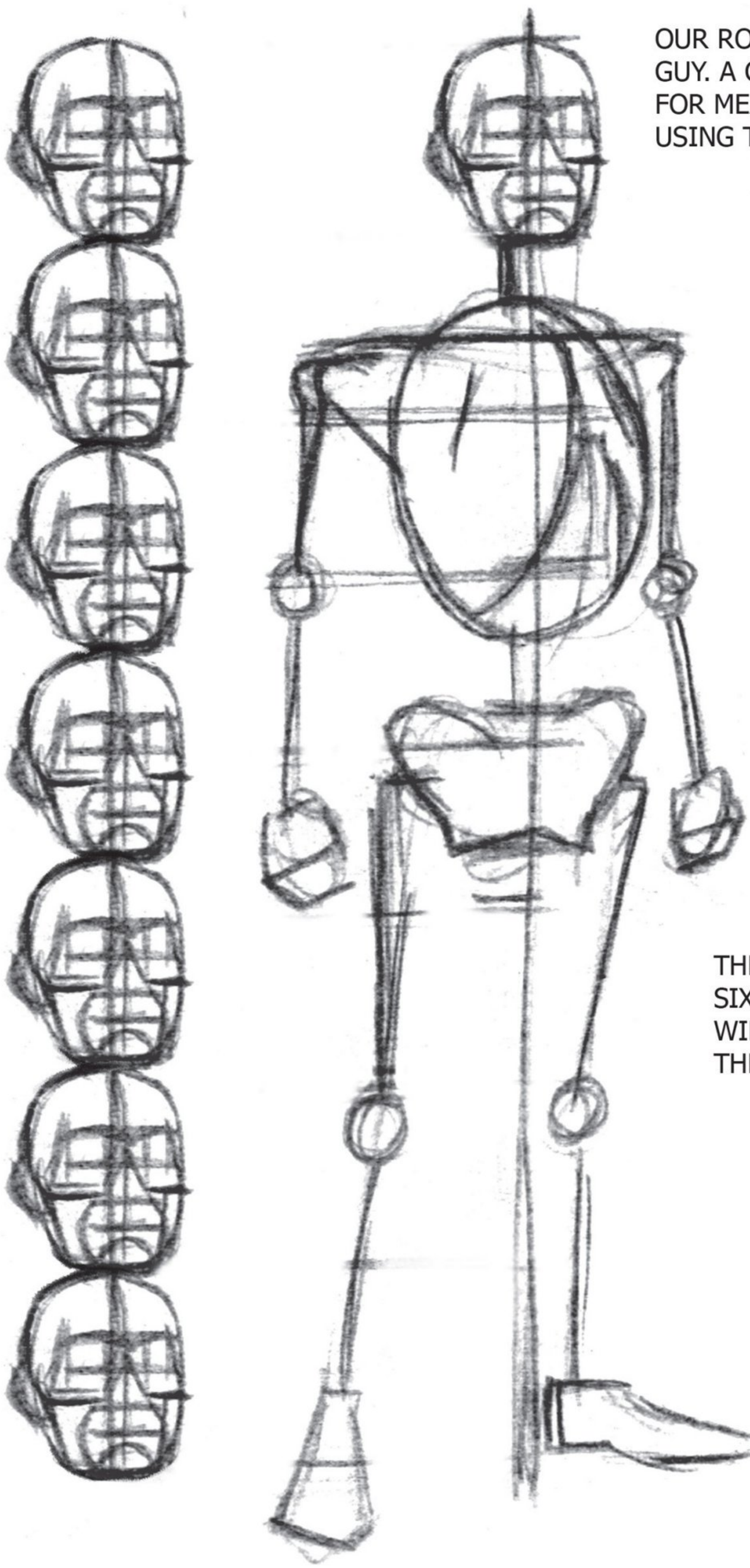
I'M INKING THE OUTLINE OF THE FIGURE WITH A BOLD FELT-TIP PEN. I FIND A .50 TIP WORKS WELL FOR THIS. YOU CAN GO LARGER, DEPENDING ON THE OVERALL SIZE OF YOUR ORIGINAL ART.



NOW I INK IN THE DETAILS OF THE FACE. TRY TO KEEP THE FACE FREE OF LINES, AS THEY CAN ADD YEARS TO YOUR HERO IN NO TIME!

OUR FINAL IMAGE, INKED, TONED, AND READY FOR ACTION!

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OTHER HEROIC SCI-FI ARCHETYPES.



OUR ROGUE IS GOING TO BE A BIG GUY. A GOOD GENERAL METHOD FOR MEASURING PROPORTIONS IS USING THE HEAD OF THE FIGURE.

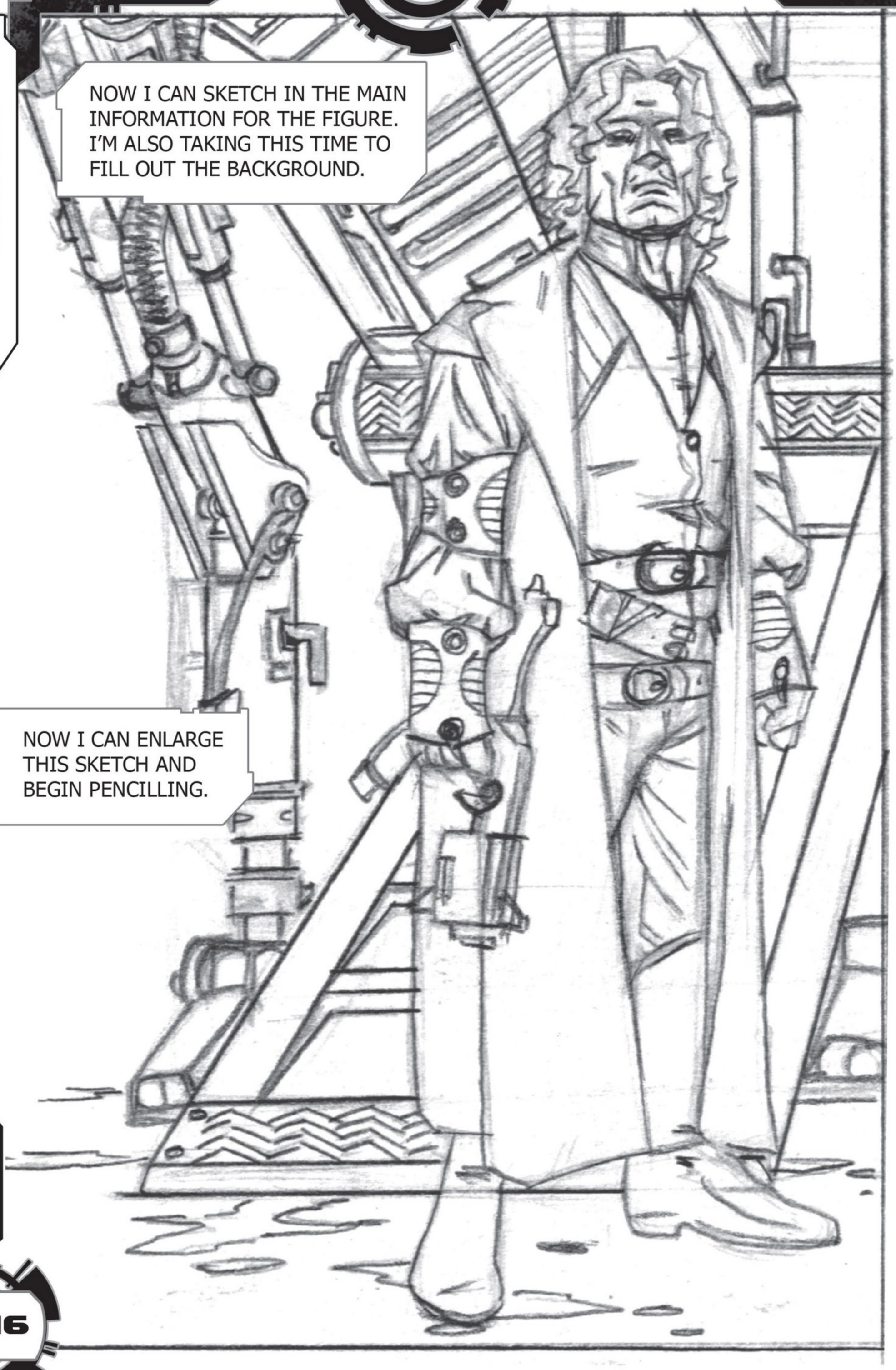
THE AVERAGE PERSON MEASURES SIX HEADS HIGH, BUT OUR ROGUE WILL BE EIGHT HEADS HIGH. THESE ARE HEROIC PROPORTIONS!

ONCE I HAVE THE PROPER PROPORTIONS DIALED IN, I CAN BEGIN BUILDING ON THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURE.

THIS CHARACTER IS GOING TO HAVE A LARGE FRAME WITH BROAD SHOULDERS.

NOW I SKETCH IN A ROUGH GUIDE FOR WHERE THE HAIR, CLOTHING, AND GEAR GO ON THE CHARACTER.

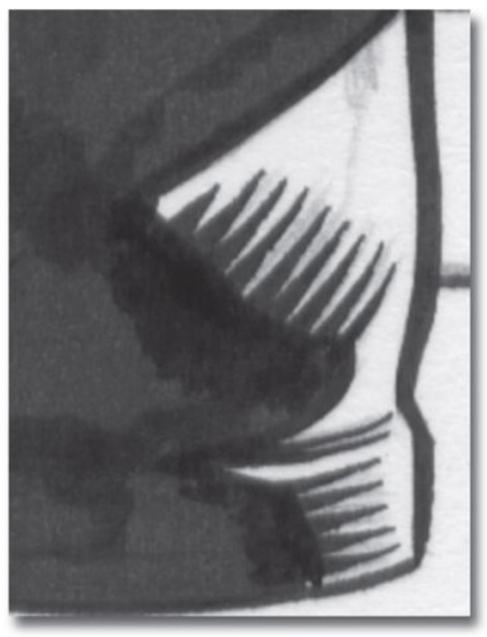
EVEN THOUGH THE COAT WILL COVER MUCH OF THE BODY, IT'S WORTH DRAWING THE ENTIRE FIGURE TO KEEP THE PROPORTIONS RIGHT.


NOW I CAN SKETCH IN THE MAIN INFORMATION FOR THE FIGURE. I'M ALSO TAKING THIS TIME TO FILL OUT THE BACKGROUND.
NOW I CAN ENLARGE THIS SKETCH AND BEGIN PENCILLING.

AS I PENCIL THE FINAL ART, I'M USING DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES TO DESCRIBE VARIOUS MATERIALS.

I MARK THE AREAS THAT WILL BE SOLID BLACK WITH SMALL X'S AS A REMINDER THAT THEY NEED TO BE FILLED.

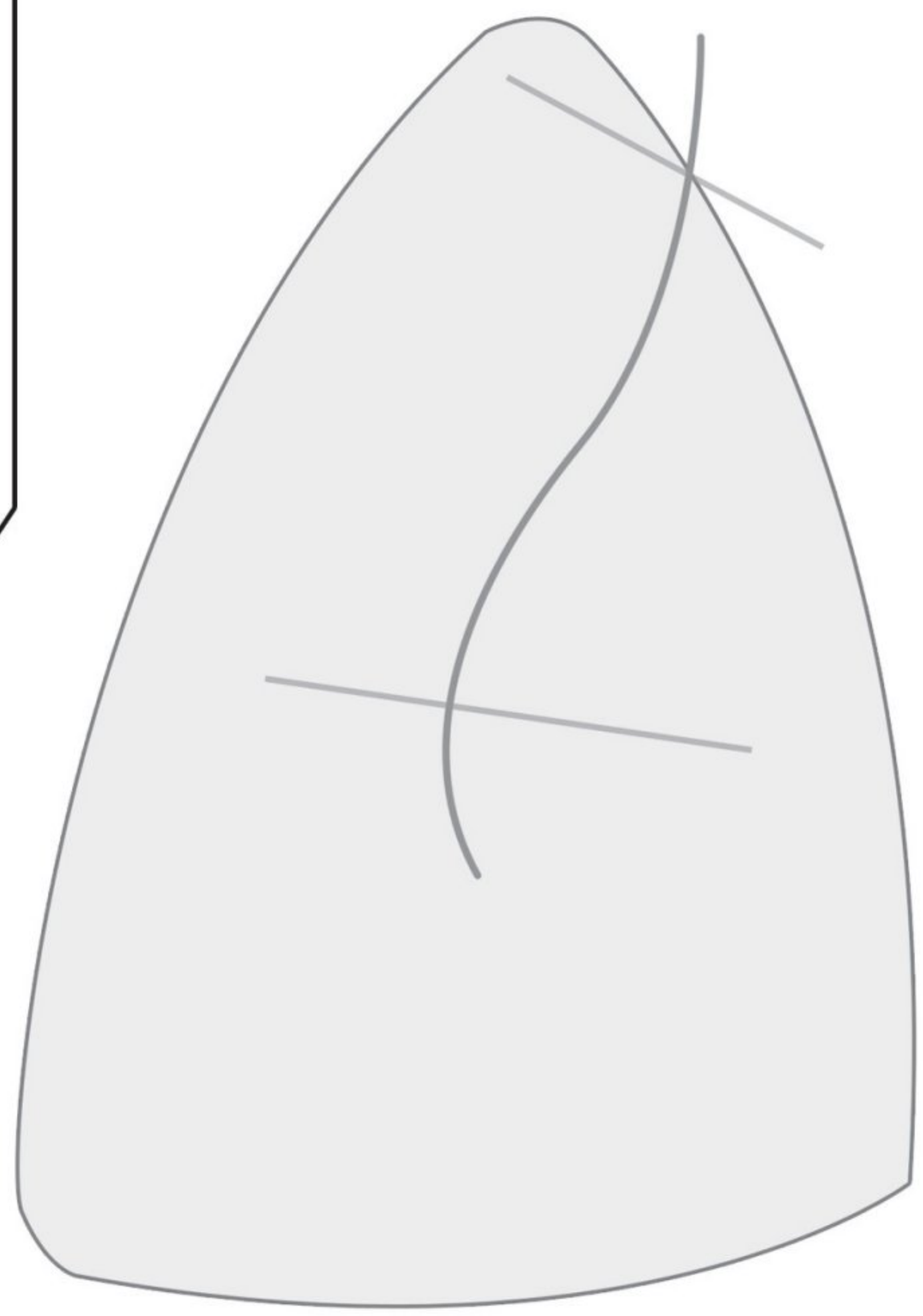
YOU CAN TACKLE THE INKING WITH BRUSHES, QUILLS, OR FELT-TIP PENS, WHATEVER YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE WITH USING.



YOU CAN ACHIEVE GOOD RESULTS WITH ALMOST ANY DRAWING TOOLS.

EXPERIMENT. GETTING LINEWORK THAT YOU'LL BE REALLY HAPPY WITH REQUIRES PATIENCE AND CONCENTRATION.

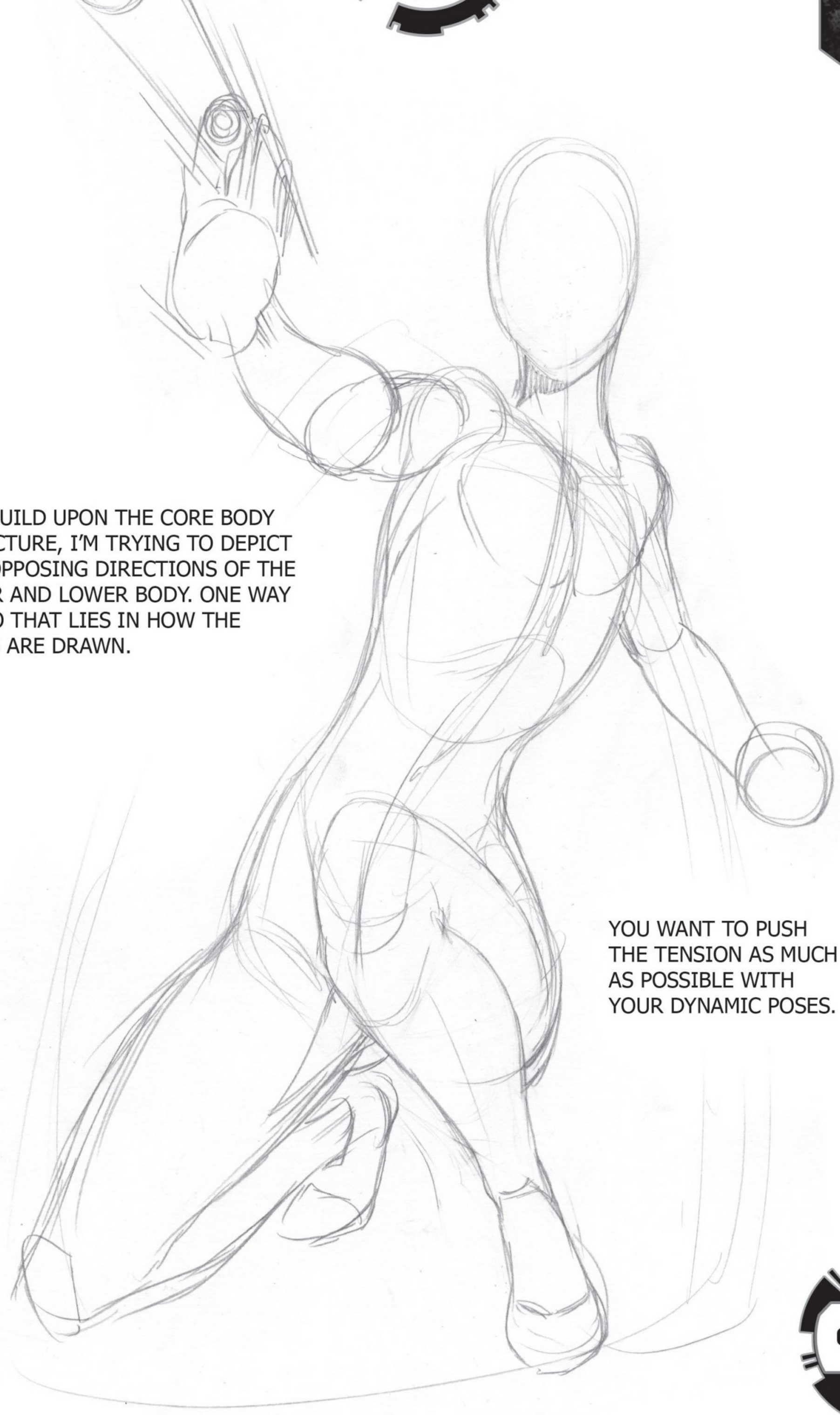
IN THE FINAL INKS, YOU CAN SEE HOW MUCH THE SOLID BLACKS ENHANCE THE WRINKLES AND FOLDS IN THE FABRIC, ADDING TO THE VOLUME OF THE FIGURE.



I WANT OUR HERO PRINCESS IN A DYNAMIC POSE. I START OUT BY SKETCHING A SHAPE THAT REPRESENTS THE AREA THE CHARACTER WILL OCCUPY.

I THEN DRAW IN THE MAIN BODY LINE, AS WELL AS THE LINES INDICATING THE SHOULDERS AND HIPS.

I CAN NOW START BUILDING THE CORE OF THE CHARACTER'S BODY.



AS I BUILD UPON THE CORE BODY STRUCTURE, I'M TRYING TO DEPICT THE OPPOSING DIRECTIONS OF THE UPPER AND LOWER BODY. ONE WAY TO DO THAT LIES IN HOW THE LIMBS ARE DRAWN.

YOU WANT TO PUSH THE TENSION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITH YOUR DYNAMIC POSES.

AS I DRAW IN THE MAIN FEATURES, I WANT TO KEEP THEM SUBTLE. WHILE OUR PRINCESS IS A STRONG ACTION HERO, I DON'T WANT HER FACE TO BE TOO SEVERE-LOOKING.

I ADDED A TIARA SO THAT SHE WOULD BE MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE CLASSIC PRINCESS LOOK.

I'M GOING GIVE HER A ONE-PIECE SUIT, SOMETHING FORM-FITTING AND SIMPLE.

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH USING ONE VANISHING POINT IS THE STRONG INFLUENCE IT HAS ON THE EYE.

AS I INK THIS PIECE, I BREAK OUT MY RULER AND A COMPASS. THE COMPASS IS USED TO INK THE LARGE RADIUS BEHIND THE PRINCESS. I USED A CIRCLE TEMPLATE FOR THE BARREL OF THE BLASTER.

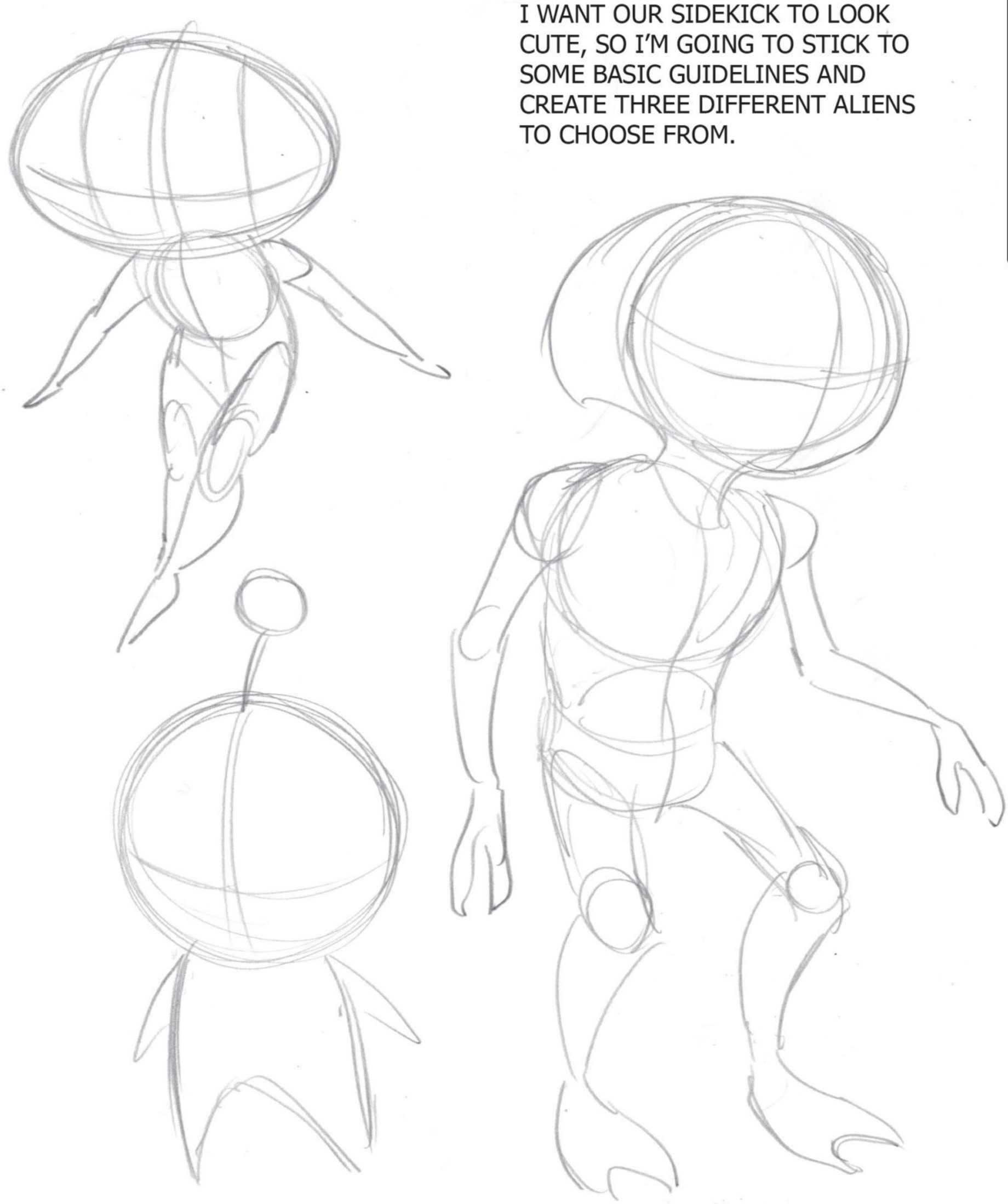
WITH THE INKING DONE, I JUST NEED TO FILL IN THE SOLID BLACK AREAS.

IN PICKING HIGHLIGHTS ON DARK MATERIALS, MAKE CERTAIN YOUR CHOICES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE REST OF YOUR LIGHTING SCHEME.

WITH SOME SIMPLE TONES, OUR PRINCESS IS READY TO DEFEND HER PEOPLE!

WHEN IT COMES TO CREATING AN ALIEN SIDEKICK FOR OUR HEROES, I HAVE ANY NUMBER OF OPTIONS.

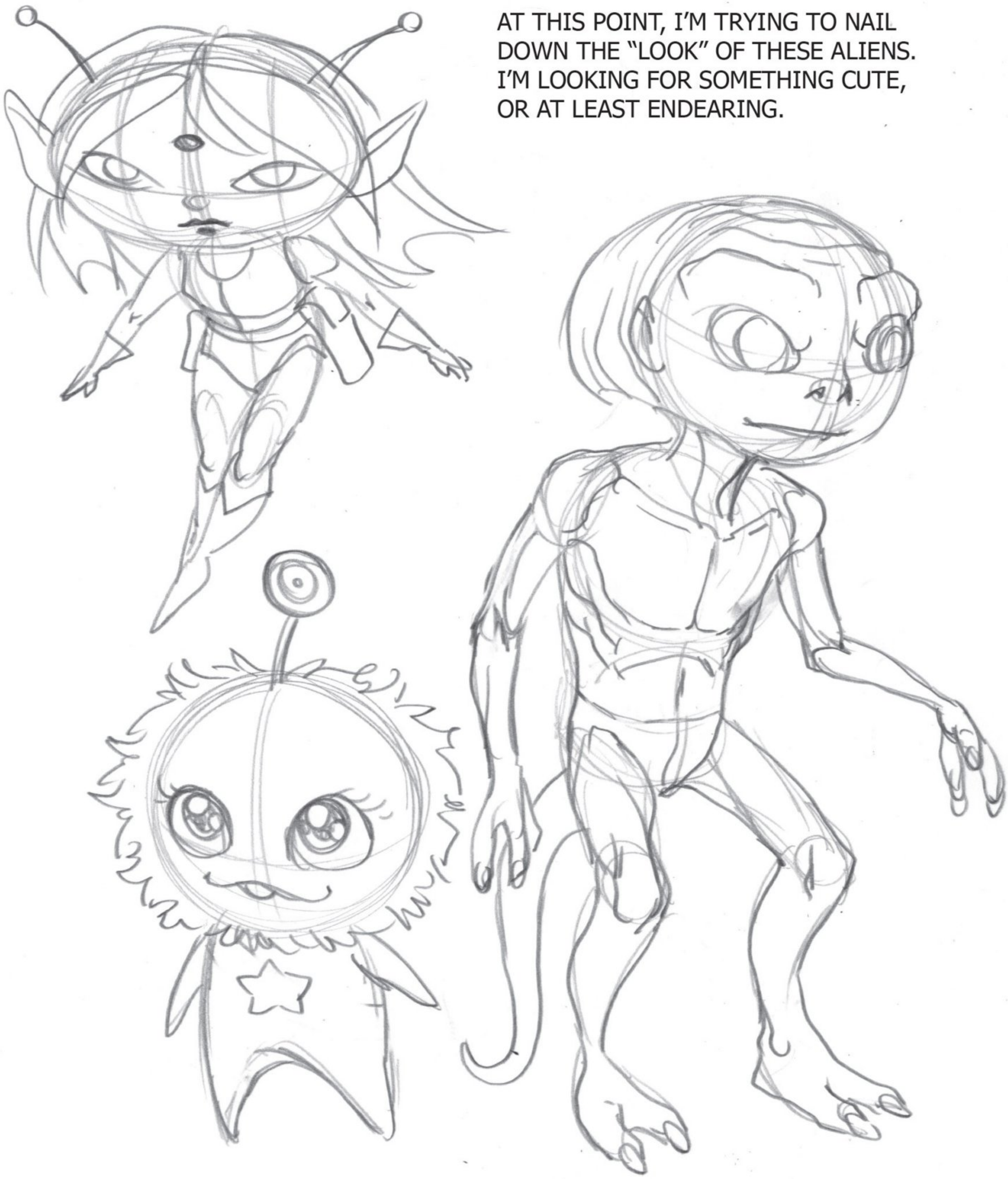
I WANT OUR SIDEKICK TO LOOK CUTE, SO I'M GOING TO STICK TO SOME BASIC GUIDELINES AND CREATE THREE DIFFERENT ALIENS TO CHOOSE FROM.



THE COMMON ELEMENTS IN THESE DESIGNS WILL BE ENLARGED HEADS WITH LARGE EYES AND SMALL OR UNDERDEVELOPED BODIES.

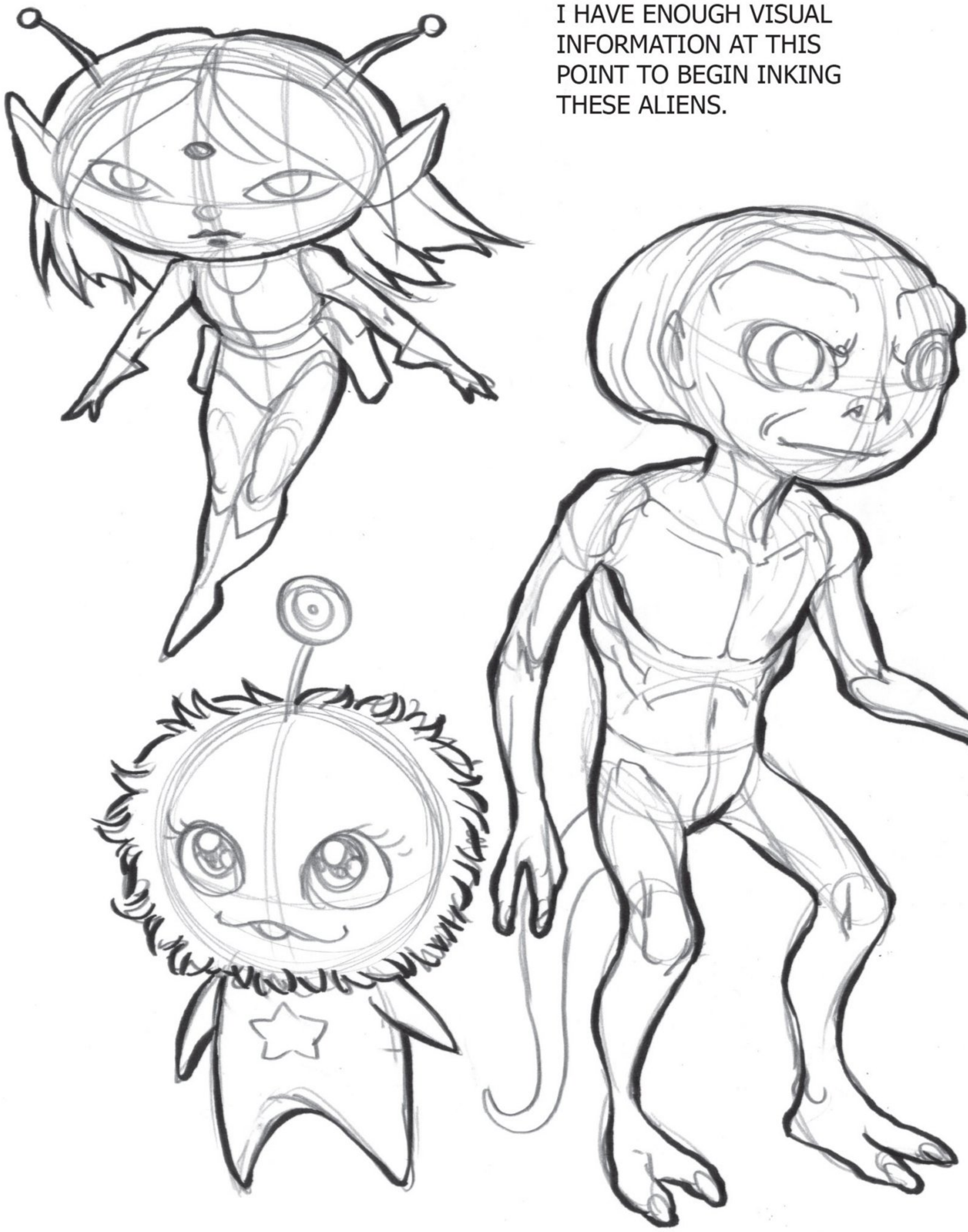
ALIEN

AT THIS POINT, I'M TRYING TO NAIL DOWN THE "LOOK" OF THESE ALIENS. I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING CUTE, OR AT LEAST ENDEARING.



I ALSO WANT TO VARY THE DESIGNS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. I WANT THEM TO BE AS DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER AS THEY WILL BE FROM THE HEROES.

I HAVE ENOUGH VISUAL INFORMATION AT THIS POINT TO BEGIN INKING THESE ALIENS.

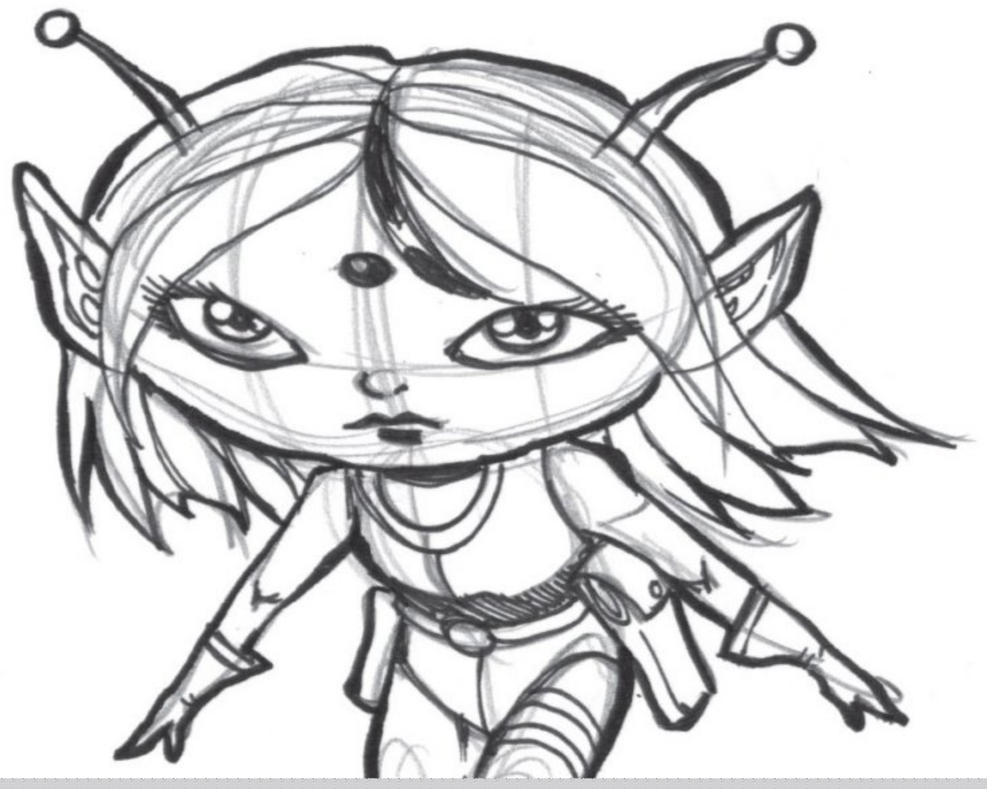


THESE CHARACTERS ARE ALREADY STARTING TO LOOK TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER.

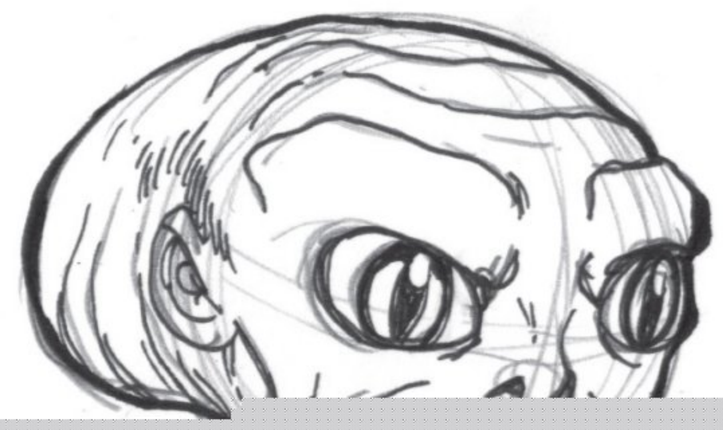
SIDEKICKS

ALIEN

FOR THIS ALIEN, I PULLED OUT A NUMBER OF CLASSIC TRAITS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO ALIENS. POINTED EARS, ANTENNAE, AND HER STRANGE COSTUME HELP REINFORCE HER EXTRATERRESTRIAL NATURE.



IN THIS EXAMPLE, I WAS LOOKING TO CREATE SOMETHING CLOSER TO WHAT AN ACTUAL ALIEN MIGHT LOOK LIKE, WHILE STILL KEEPING THE "CUTE FACTOR" HIGH ENOUGH FOR MY STORY'S NEEDS.



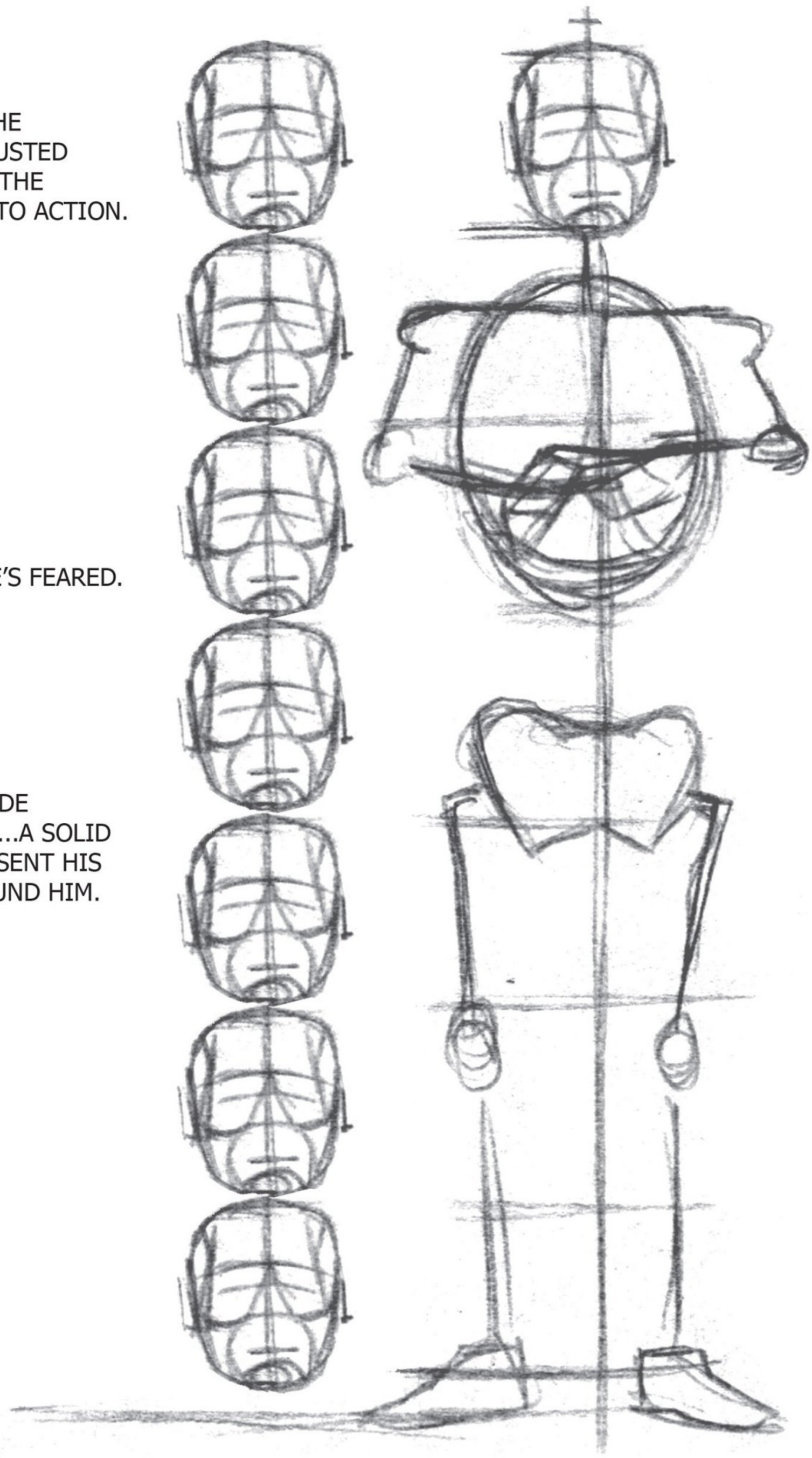
IN THE FINAL DRAWING, I'VE DECREASED THE SIZE OF OUR VILLAIN'S HEAD. WHY? BECAUSE HE LOOKS MUCH LARGER AS A RESULT. SURE, HIS HELMET IS NOW THE SAME SIZE AS HIS HEAD WOULD NORMALLY BE, BUT VISUAL TRICKS LIKE THIS ARE A GREAT AID TO THE ARTIST.

RIGHT HAND

THE RIGHT HAND IS THE OVERLORD'S MOST TRUSTED LIEUTENANT. HE PUTS THE OVERLORD'S PLANS INTO ACTION.

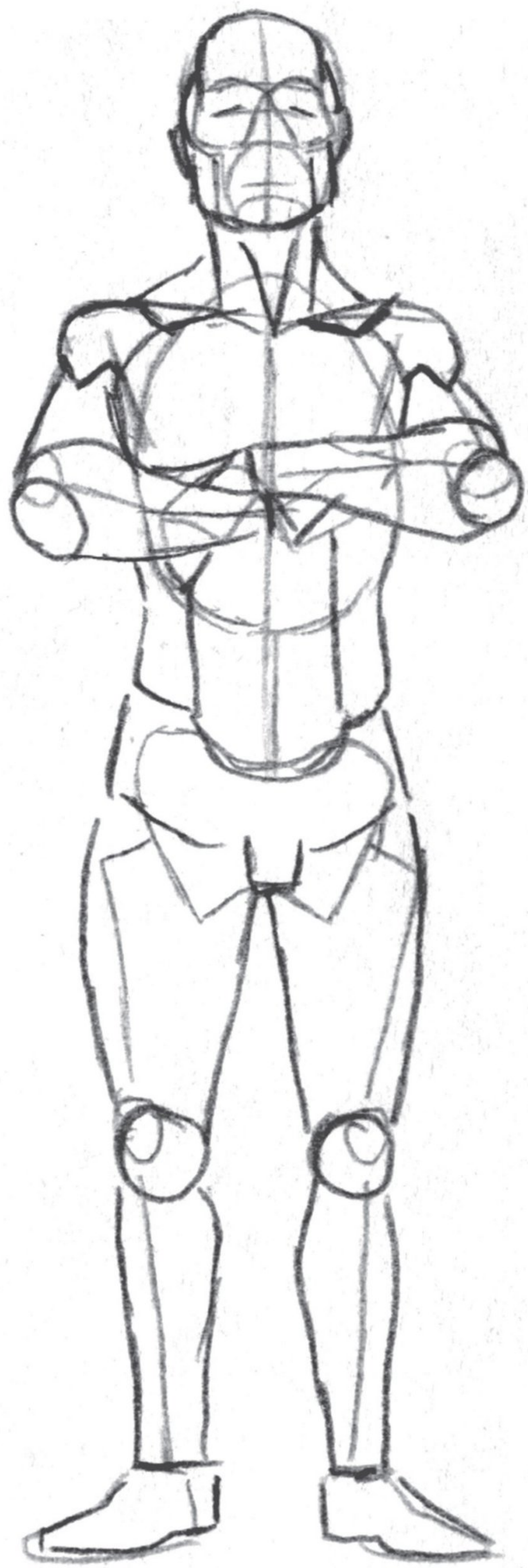
MOST IMPORTANTLY, HE'S FEARED.

I WANT HIS POSE TO EXUDE AUTHORITY AND MENACE...A SOLID STANCE THAT CAN REPRESENT HIS MASTERY OF THOSE AROUND HIM.



AS I BUILD UP MY ROUGH SKETCH, I WANT TO ALTER THE SHAPE OF THE HEAD TO PULL THE DESIGN AWAY FROM A STANDARD HUMAN APPEARANCE.

IN DRAWING THE ARMS, THIS IS A GOOD TIME USE CYLINDERS TO DESCRIBE THEIR SHAPE. REMEMBER AS YOU DRAW THAT THE SHAPES WILL OVERLAP IN SEQUENCE, FROM FOREARM TO UPPER ARM TO SHOULDER.



I'M GIVING HIM A BILLOWING COAT TO HELP MAKE HIM SEEM LARGER.

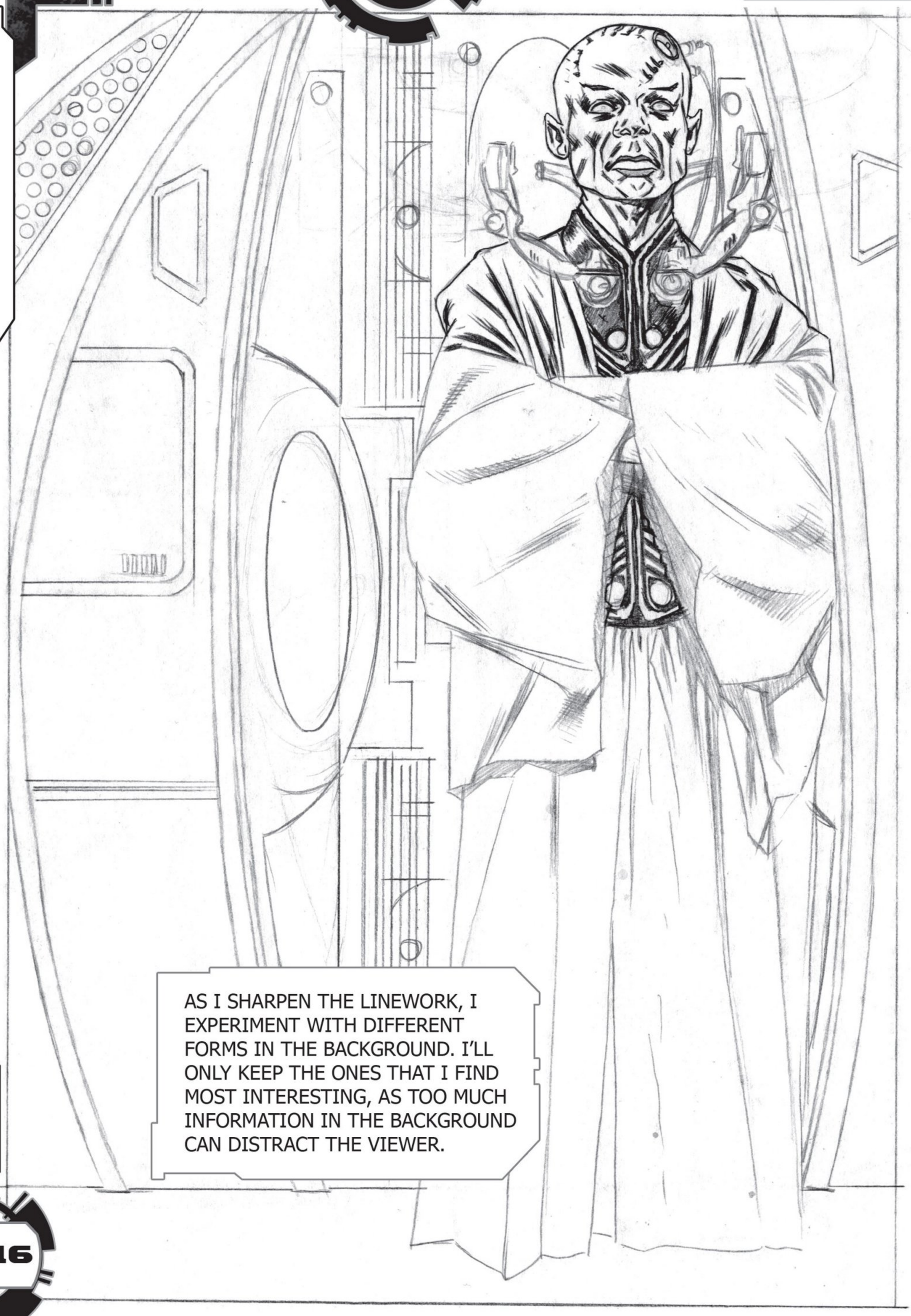
EVEN THOUGH I'M COVERING UP MUCH OF THE ANATOMY, IT'S STILL IMPORTANT FOR ME TO DRAW IT. THE ANATOMY WILL AID WITH DRAWING CORRECT WRINKLING AND DRAPING IN THE FABRIC. IT WILL ALSO HELP IN GUIDING THE PLACEMENT OF HIS GEAR.

IN ADDITION TO HIS STATELY ROBES, I'M BRINGING SOME TECH INTO THE EQUATION.

THE ARMATURES COMING FROM OUR CHARACTER'S COLLAR ARE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION-GATHERING.

NOT ONLY ARE THEY USEFUL, THEY ADD A UNIQUE ELEMENT TO THE CHARACTER'S SILHOUETTE AND CAN GIVE THE FACE A CREEPY UNDERLIGHTING WHEN THEY'RE IN USE.

RIGHT HAND



AS I SHARPEN THE LINEWORK, I EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT FORMS IN THE BACKGROUND. I'LL ONLY KEEP THE ONES THAT I FIND MOST INTERESTING, AS TOO MUCH INFORMATION IN THE BACKGROUND CAN DISTRACT THE VIEWER.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE MOOD WITH YOUR LIGHTING. A SIMPLE GRADIENT TONE AND SOME BASIC HIGHLIGHTS ARE ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT THIS GUY IS ALL ABOUT.

JUST REMEMBER THAT TO HIGHLIGHT EFFECTIVELY, YOU NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE SHAPES THAT MAKE UP THE STRUCTURE OF THE HEAD. YOU DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO GUESS ON THINGS LIKE THAT.

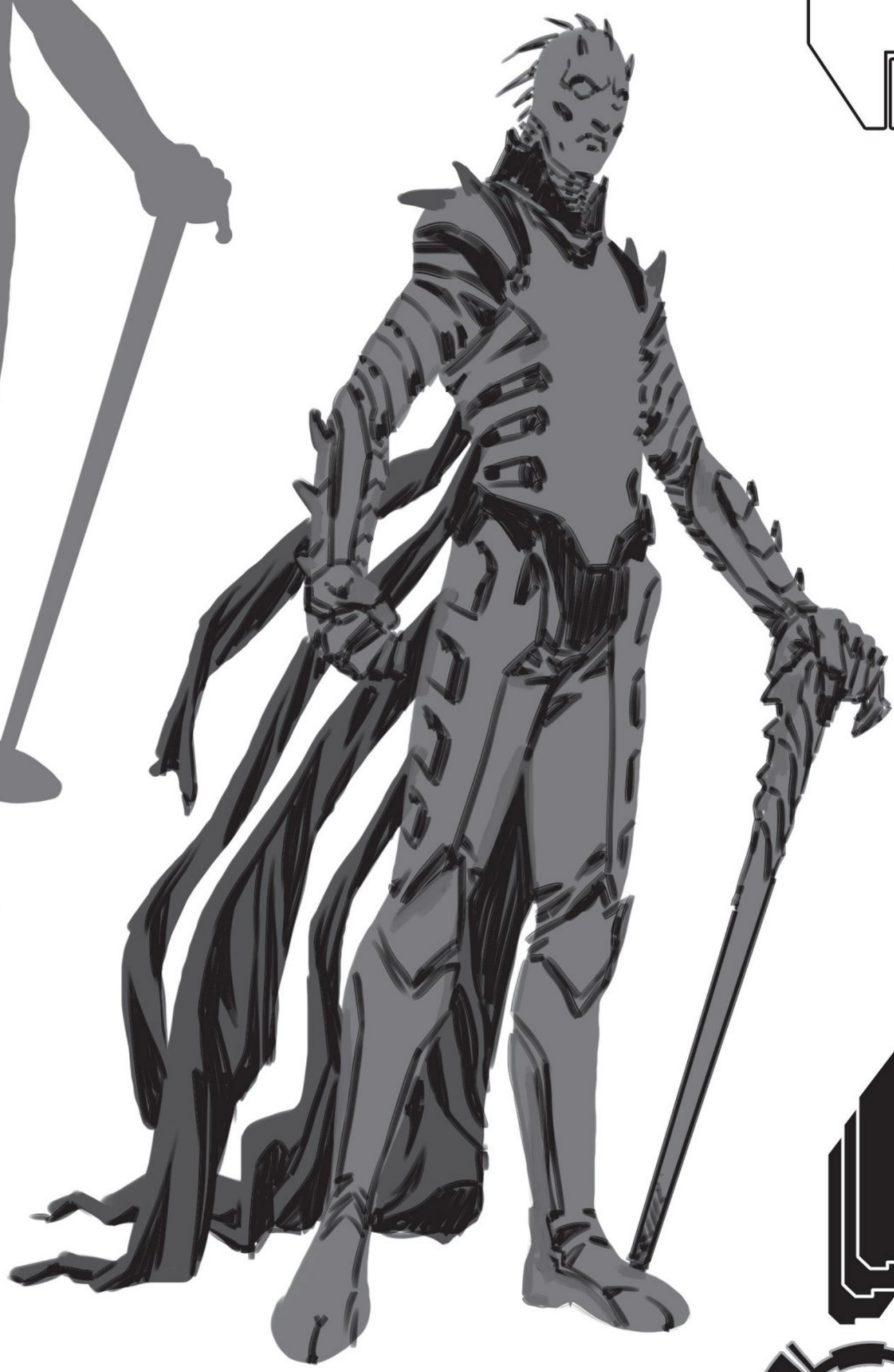
GANG BOSS

FOR OUR GANG BOSS, I'M GOING TRY A COUPLE OF DIFFERENT CRIMINAL TYPES. THE FIRST IS STYLISH, ELEGANT. I'M GOING TO INCORPORATE CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT WILL BE REPEATED THROUGHOUT AS A CONSISTENT THEME.

THE SECOND BOSS WILL BE A LOWER-CLASS TYPE—GRUBBY, GREEDY AND GLUTTONOUS.

I START OUT WITH A BASIC SILHOUETTE. I'M JUST FEELING AROUND FOR IDEAS AT THIS POINT. I HIT UPON THE IDEA OF A WALKING STICK OR CANE EARLY ON. PROPS CAN GO A LONG WAY IN HELPING DEFINE YOUR CHARACTER

I'VE ADDED SOME SPIKES AND RIBBONS OF CLOTH AS I START EXPANDING ON THE ORIGINAL FORM.



THOSE SPIKES GIVE ME AN IDEA FOR THE DIRECTION THAT I WANT TO GO WITH THIS DESIGN. I'M GOING FOR A MORE DEMONIC LOOK FOR OUR GANG BOSS.

THE MAIN PLATE ON HIS CHEST AND THE STRAPS ARE MEANT TO CONVEY THE IDEA THAT HE'S WEARING SOME SORT OF BODY ARMOR.

GANG BOSS

ONCE THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE DESIGN ARE WORKING, I START PAINTING IN LIGHTER TONES. I NEED TO DRAW OUT SOME VOLUME IN THE FIGURE, MAKING SENSE OF THE FORMS I'VE INCLUDED.

I'M GOING TO DESIGN A TATTOO AND ADD IT TO THE CHARACTER. TATTOOS HAVE BECOME MORE COMMONPLACE THESE DAYS, BUT OFTEN THEY ARE STILL ASSOCIATED WITH CRIMINALS.

I WANT A DESIGN THAT WILL FIT EASILY ON THE SIDE OF THE HEAD AND CAN BE REPEATED OVER AND OVER AGAIN WITH NO PROBLEM.

WITH THE TATTOO PLACED ONTO HIS HEAD, OUR CHARACTER IS REALLY STARTING TO LOOK THE PART.

I JUST KEEP REFINING THE PIECE UNTIL I'M SATISFIED. I EXTEND AND ENLARGE THE HORNS AND SPIKES TO HELP MAKE THE BOSS MORE RECOGNIZABLE IN SILHOUETTE. FINALLY, I CHANGE SOME WONKY ANATOMY THAT I WAS HAVING PROBLEMS WITH, AND WE'RE DONE!

FOR OUR SECOND BOSS, I HAD A COUPLE OF IDEAS, SO I'LL EXPLORE BOTH FOR THIS EXAMPLE.

I'M GOING TO START OUT WITH A SKETCH THAT I PULLED FROM MY SKETCHBOOK. I'M GOING TO TONE THIS AND SEE WHERE IT TAKES ME.

I'LL DROP IN A QUICK GRADUATED TONE. I'M GOING TO IGNORE ANY STRAY LINES FOR NOW; I CAN PAINT OVER THEM LATER.

GANG BOSS

THE IDEA BEHIND THE TONING HERE IS TO SHOW THE TEXTURE AND BULK OF THE CHARACTER. UNFORTUNATELY, I'M JUST NOT FEELING IT.

HE SEEMS PRETTY SLIMY AND REPUGNANT, BUT HE'S VERY SIMILAR TO DESIGNS I'VE SEEN DONE IN THE PAST, SO I'LL LEAVE THIS ONE AS-IS AND GO ON TO THE NEXT IDEA.

I'M GOING TO CREATE A FIGURE BASED ON THE ORIGINAL SKETCH AND THEN SEE WHERE MY IMAGINATION TAKES ME FROM THERE.

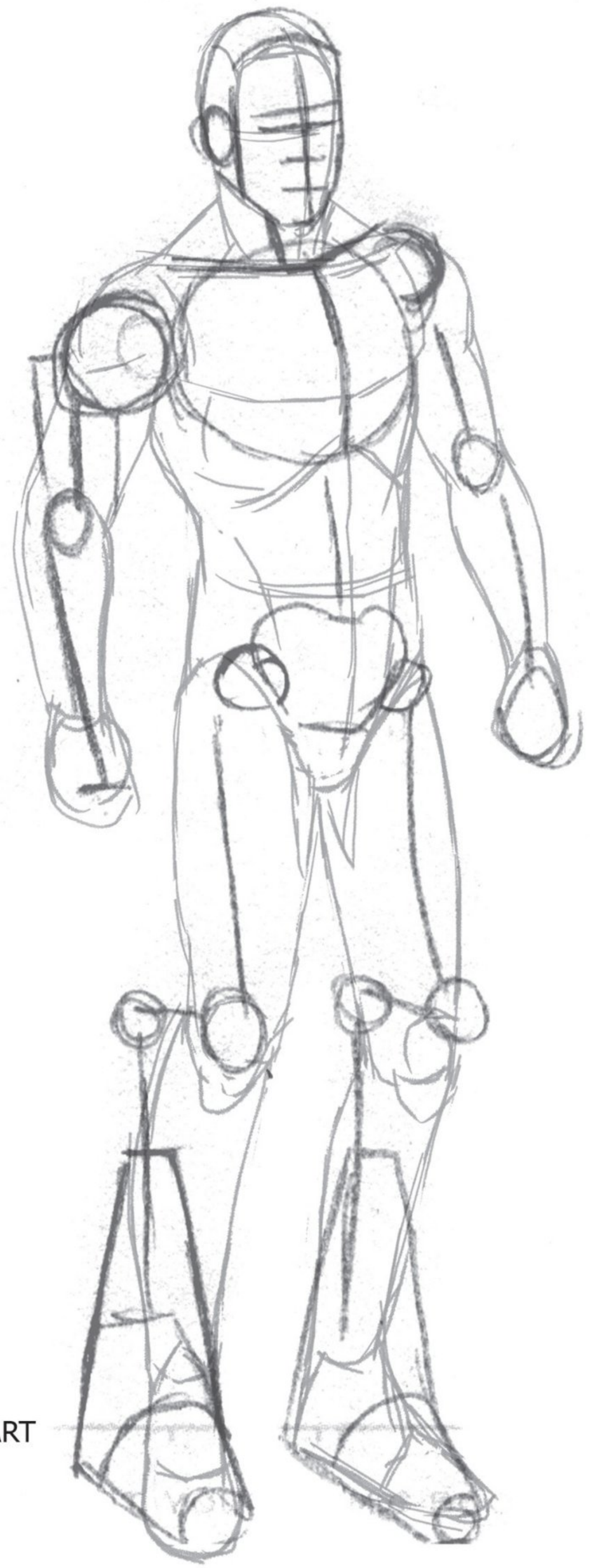
AS GO OVER THE PIECE, I HIT ON THE IDEA OF MAKING THE BOSS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN A SLUG AND AN INSECT OR CRUSTACEAN.

I'M LIKING THIS A LOT MORE THAN MY INITIAL TRY WITH THIS DESIGN. IT'S DIFFERENT AND VERY STRANGE, WHICH IS WHAT YOU NEED SOMETIMES. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN SCI-FI ENVIRONMENTS.

GANG BOSS

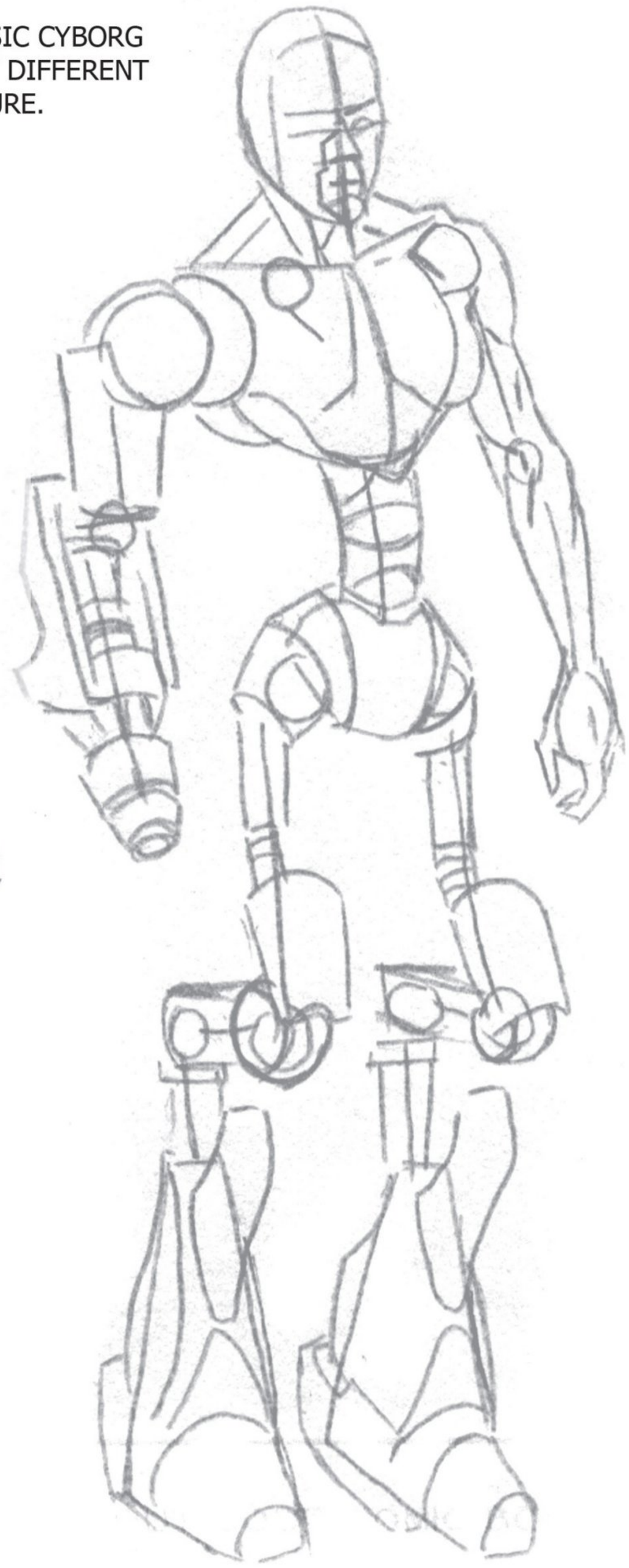
IN THE FINAL DESIGN, I FLESH OUT THE DETAILS A BIT MORE. I NEED TO MAKE THE CHARACTER FEEL REAL. THIS IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH DESIGNS THAT PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT PEOPLE EXPECT.

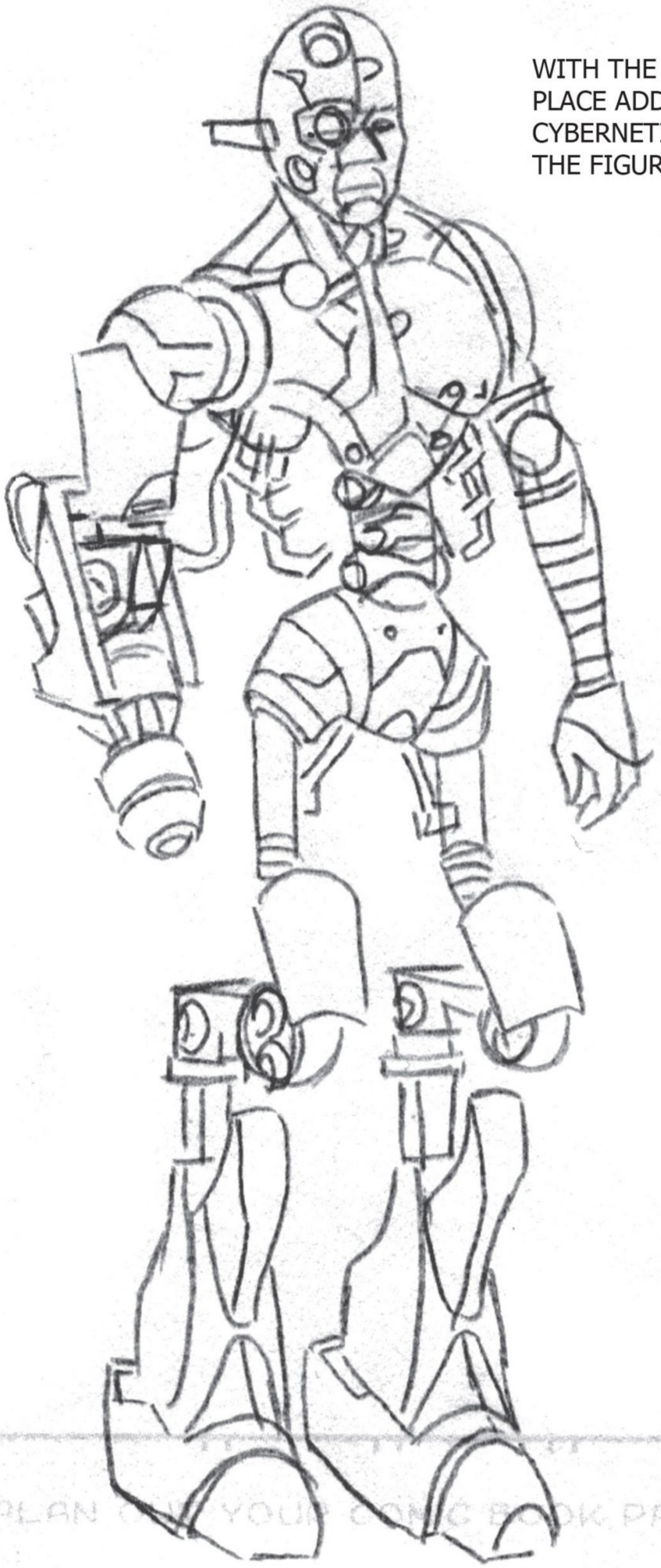
FOR OUR NEXT CHARACTER, I WANT TO CREATE A CYBORG THAT HAS BECOME ALMOST TOTALLY ROBOTIC. THE EASIEST WAY TO START IS BY DRAWING A STANDARD HUMAN FIGURE.



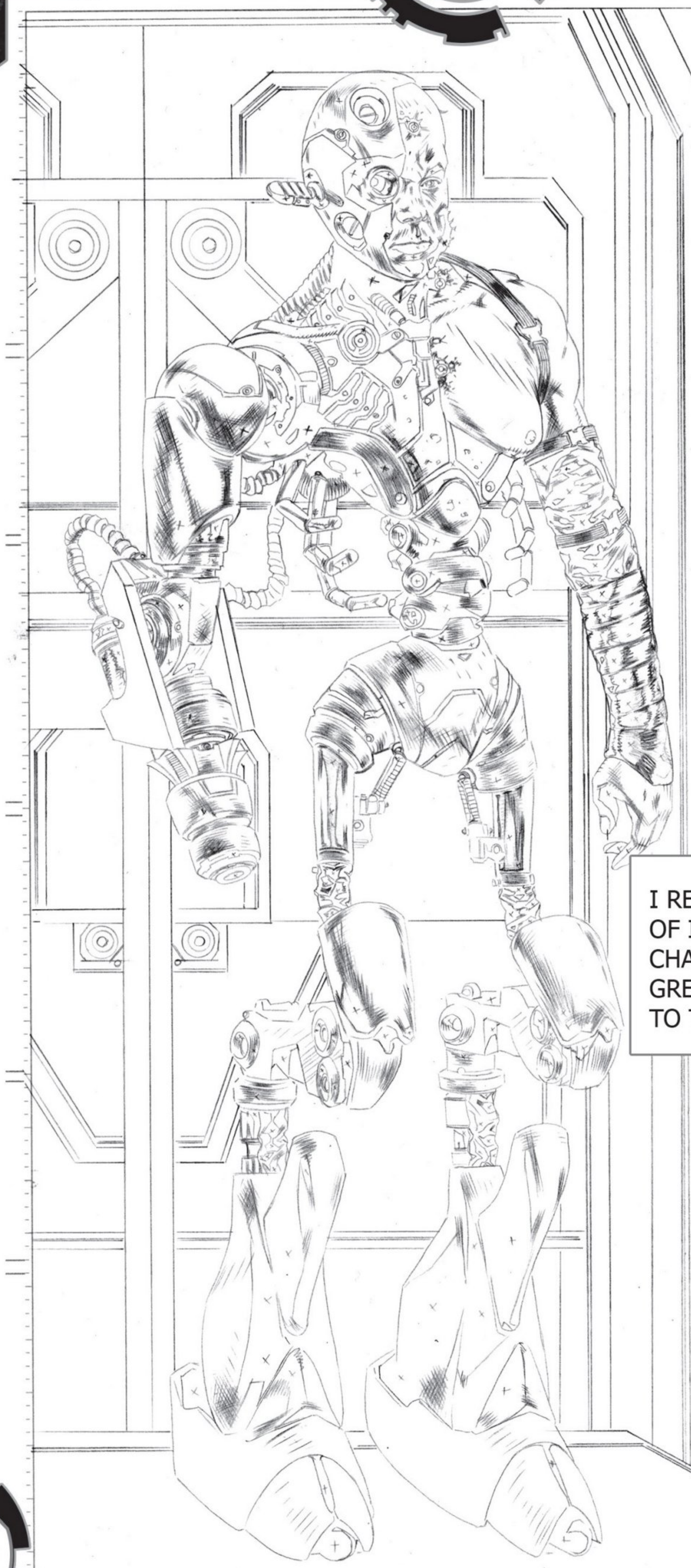
WITH THIS BASIC FORM, I CAN BEGIN TO SCULPT IN AND OUT OF THE FIGURE AND START DESIGNING THE CYBERNETIC ELEMENTS.

AS YOU CAN SEE, THE BASIC CYBORG DESIGN IS DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ORIGINAL FIGURE.

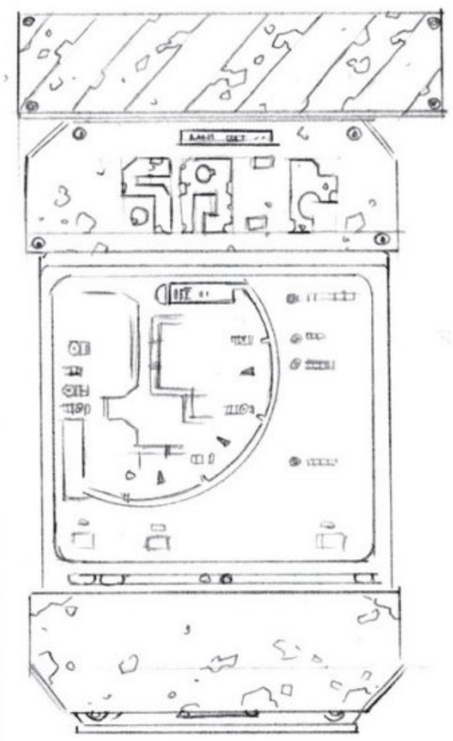




WITH THE BASIC FORMS DOWN, I CAN PLACE ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS FOR THE CYBERNETICS AND REALLY FILL OUT THE FIGURE.

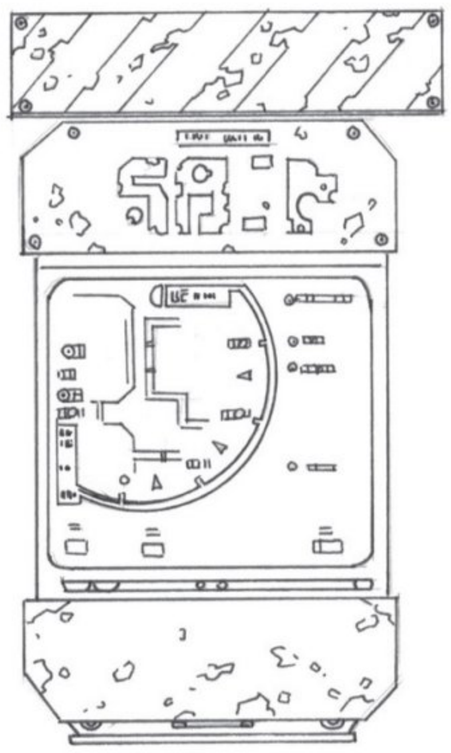


NOW TO FLESH OUT THE DETAILS AND SOLIDIFY THIS DESIGN.



I REFERENCED VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN FOR THIS CHARACTER, AS THEY LEND A GREATER SENSE OF REALITY TO THE IMAGE.

REMEMBER, YOUR DESIGN NEEDS TO MAKE SENSE. IF YOUR DESIGN IS UNCLEAR, WITH PARTS THAT SEEM TO SERVE NO PURPOSE, IT WON'T BE BELIEVABLE.

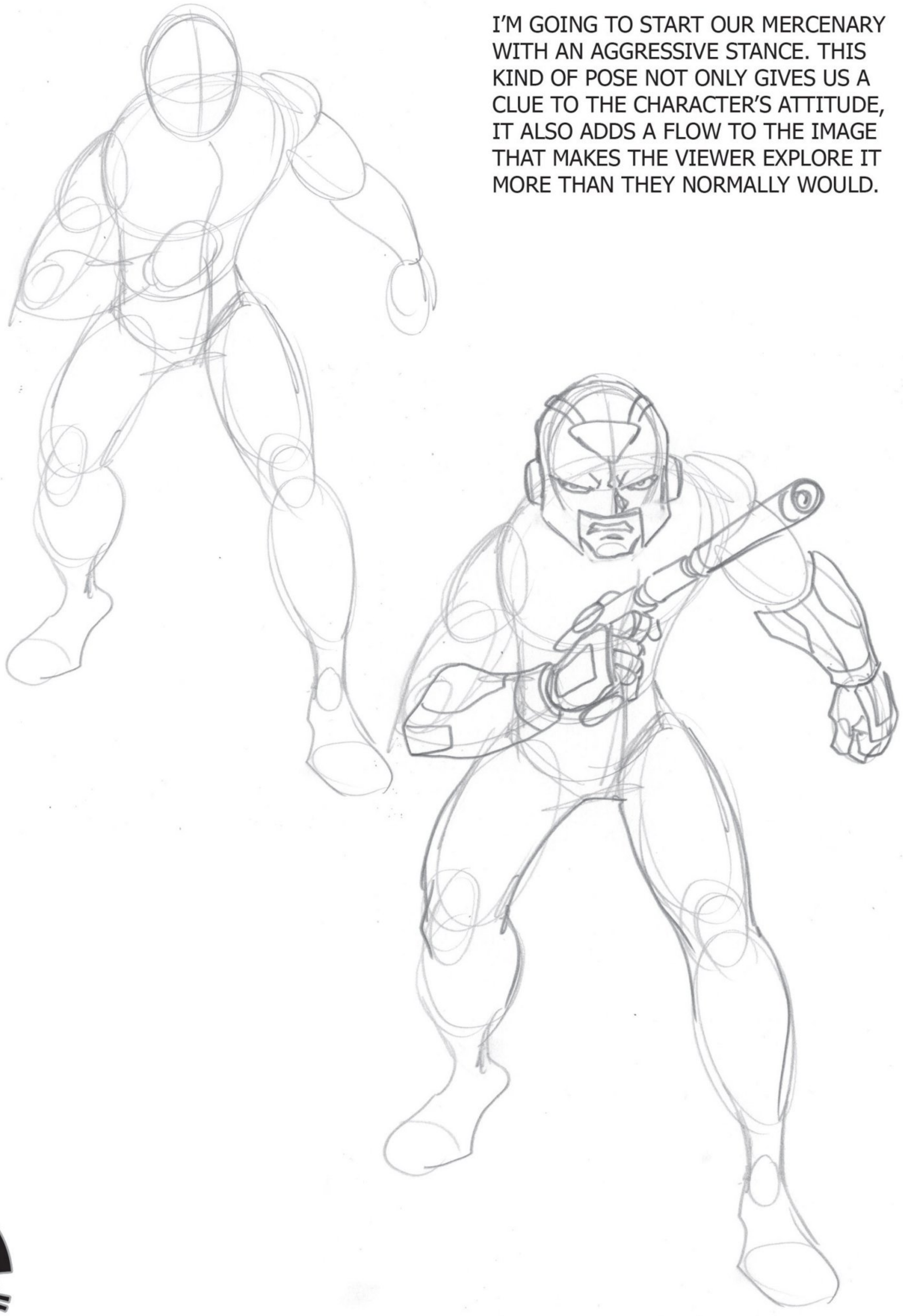


NO MATTER HOW ELABORATE THE MACHINE, MAKE SURE IT HAS ITS FOUNDATIONS IN THE REAL WORLD.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

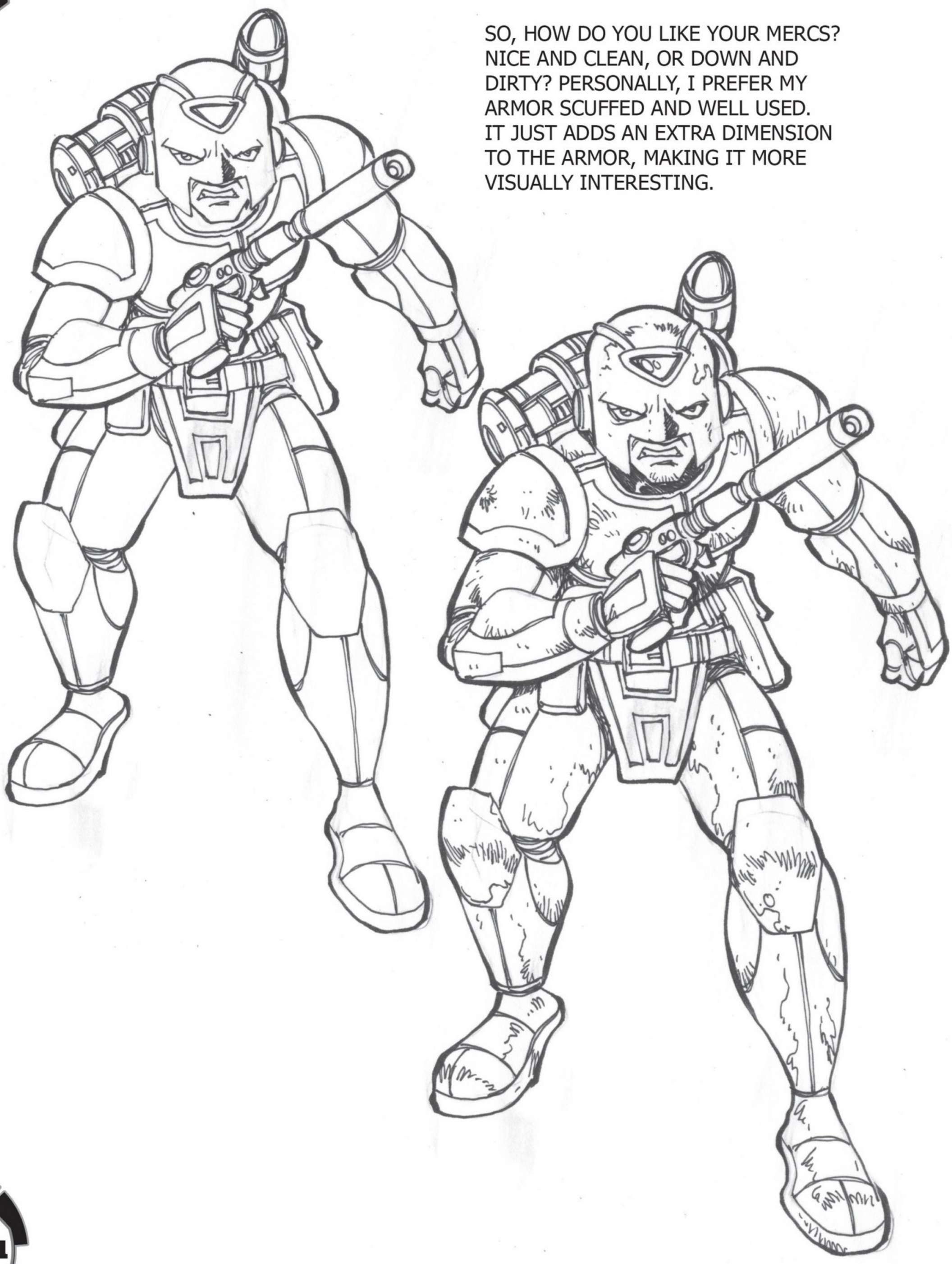
MERCENARY

I'M GOING TO START OUR MERCENARY WITH AN AGGRESSIVE STANCE. THIS KIND OF POSE NOT ONLY GIVES US A CLUE TO THE CHARACTER'S ATTITUDE, IT ALSO ADDS A FLOW TO THE IMAGE THAT MAKES THE VIEWER EXPLORE IT MORE THAN THEY NORMALLY WOULD.



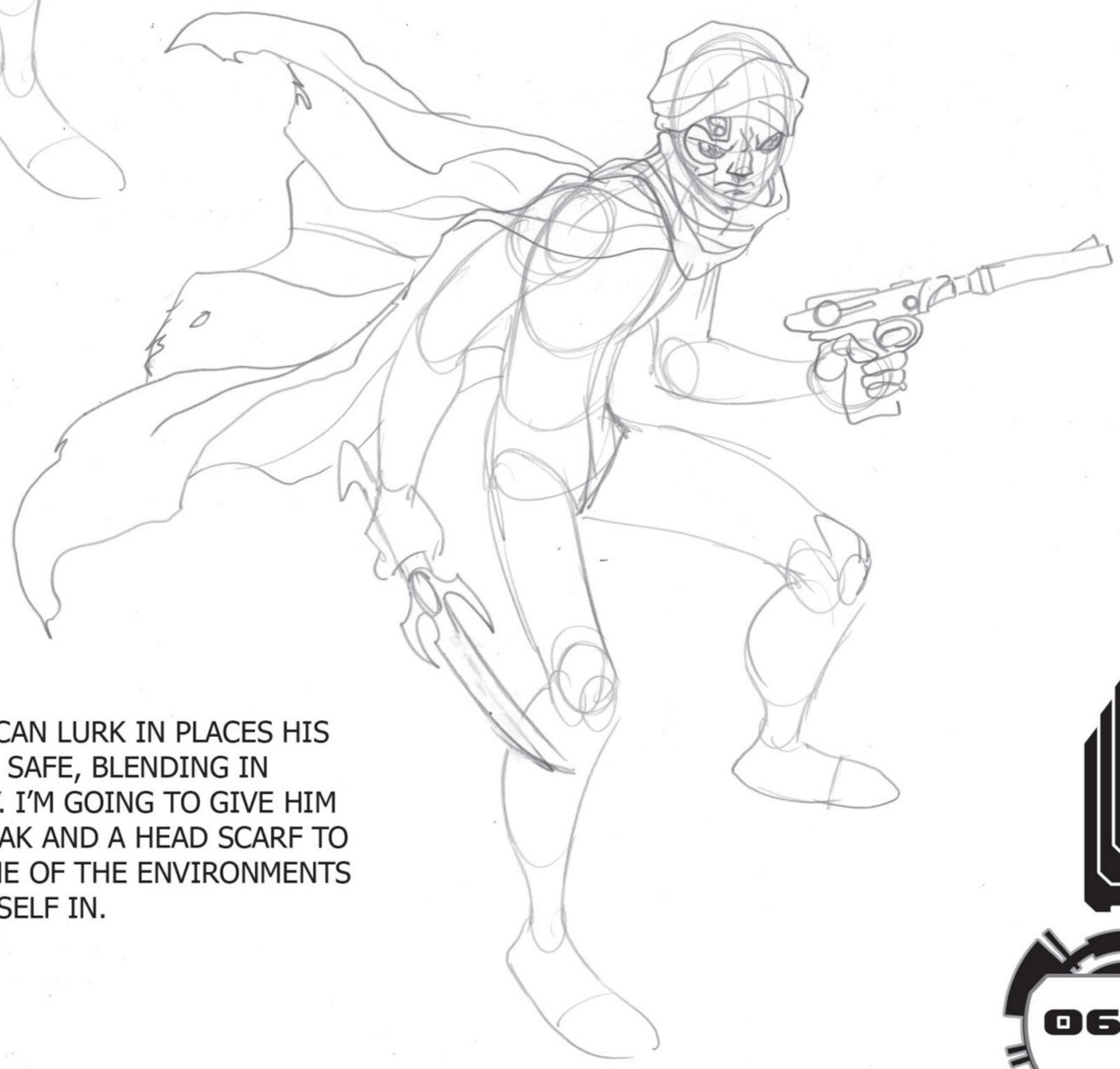
SINCE FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION, BODY ARMOR NEVER REALLY CHANGES. THE ARMOR HAS TO PROTECT OUR MERCENARY, ALLOW HIM TO MOVE EASILY, AND PROVIDE THE PROPER MENACING ASPECT.

SO, HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR MERCS? NICE AND CLEAN, OR DOWN AND DIRTY? PERSONALLY, I PREFER MY ARMOR SCUFFED AND WELL USED. IT JUST ADDS AN EXTRA DIMENSION TO THE ARMOR, MAKING IT MORE VISUALLY INTERESTING.



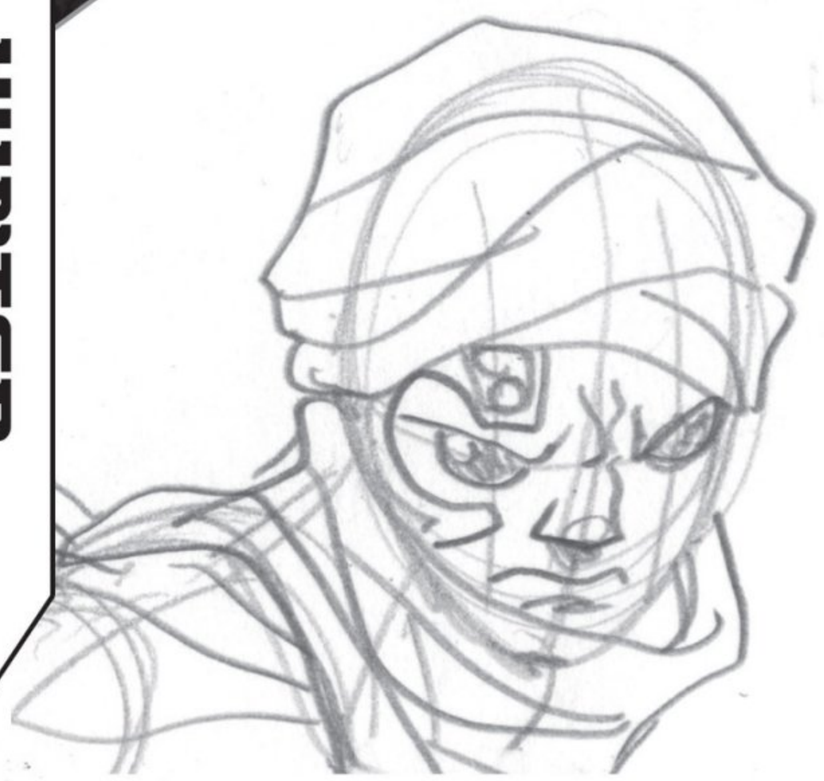
WHILE OUR MERCENARY IS A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, WILLING TO TAKE THE FIGHT TO ANYONE, ANYWHERE, FOR THE RIGHT PRICE, A BOUNTY HUNTER IS A VERY DIFFERENT ANIMAL.

OUR BOUNTY HUNTER PUTS HIS LIFE ON THE LINE NOT FOR A CAUSE OR A PAYCHECK, BUT FOR THE THRILL OF THE HUNT, PITTING HIS SKILLS AND CUNNING IN PURSUIT OF ONLY THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME.

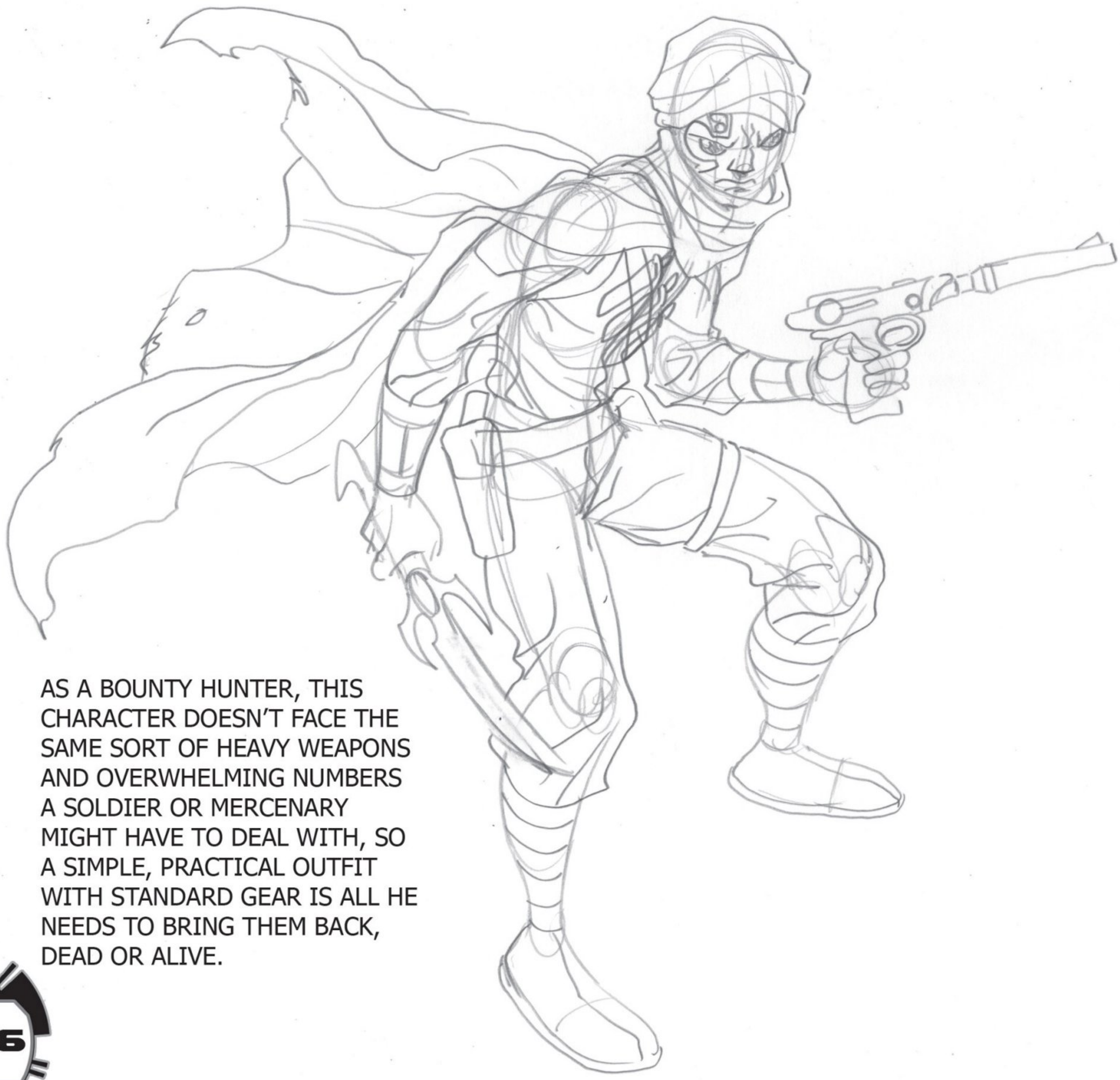


OUR HUNTER CAN LURK IN PLACES HIS TARGETS FEEL SAFE, BLENDING IN EFFORTLESSLY. I'M GOING TO GIVE HIM A FRAYED CLOAK AND A HEAD SCARF TO INDICATE SOME OF THE ENVIRONMENTS HE FINDS HIMSELF IN.

HUNTER



I'M GIVING HIM A SLIGHTLY ALIEN LOOK, WITH HIS BEADY, WIDE-SET EYES. I'VE ADDED A CYBERNETIC IMPLANT, JUST TO INDICATE SOME KIND OF TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE.

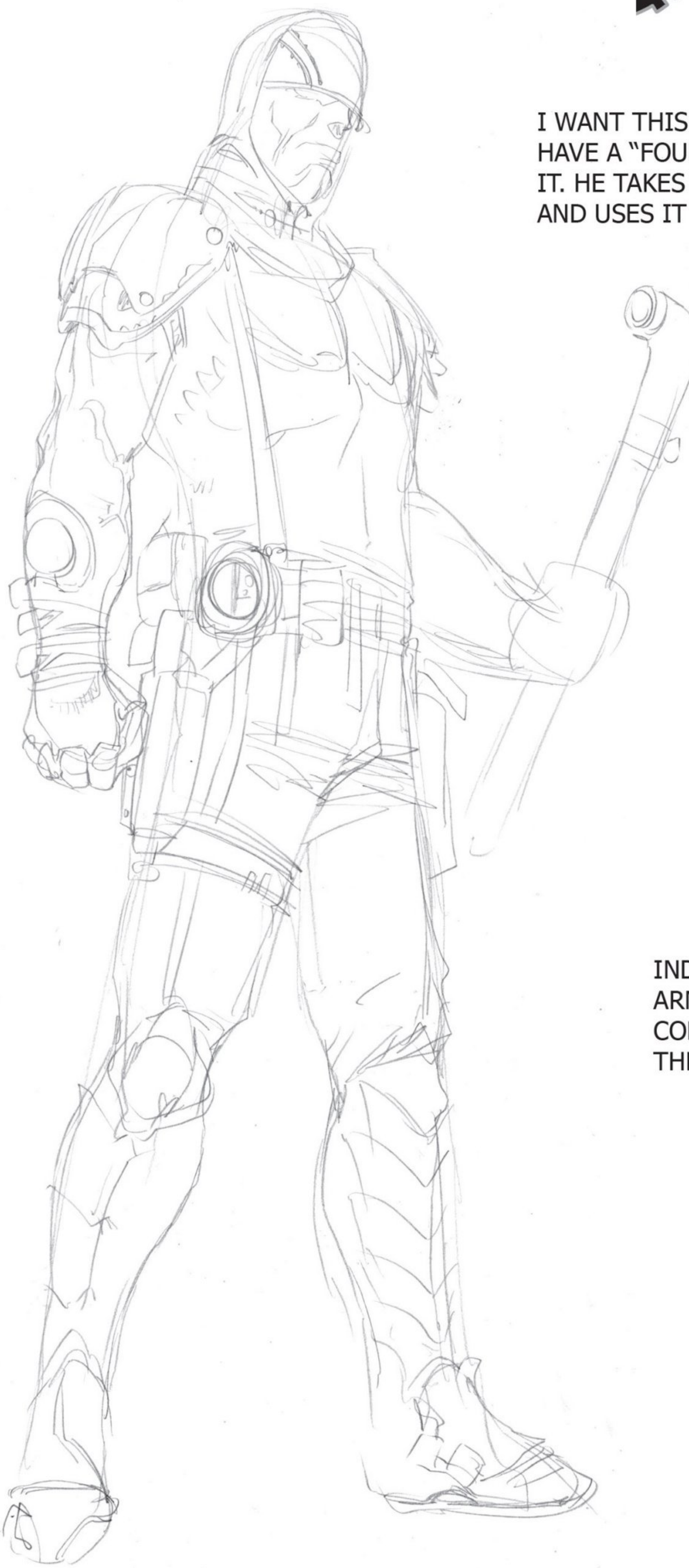


AS A BOUNTY HUNTER, THIS CHARACTER DOESN'T FACE THE SAME SORT OF HEAVY WEAPONS AND OVERWHELMING NUMBERS A SOLDIER OR MERCENARY MIGHT HAVE TO DEAL WITH, SO A SIMPLE, PRACTICAL OUTFIT WITH STANDARD GEAR IS ALL HE NEEDS TO BRING THEM BACK, DEAD OR ALIVE.

IN THE FINAL INKS, ONE OF MY GOALS WAS IN TRYING TO CAPTURE THE ETHEREAL QUALITY OF THE CLOAK. THERE'S AN ALMOST GHOST-LIKE ELEMENT TO OUR HUNTER, AND DETAILS LIKE THESE CAN GO A LONG WAY TO FURTHER THAT ASPECT OF CHARACTERS LIKE THIS.

I WANT TO BUILD THE DESIGN OF THIS THUG STARTING WITH A SOLID STANCE. THIS GUY NEEDS TO LOOK LIKE A BRICK WALL, SOLID AND IMMOVABLE.

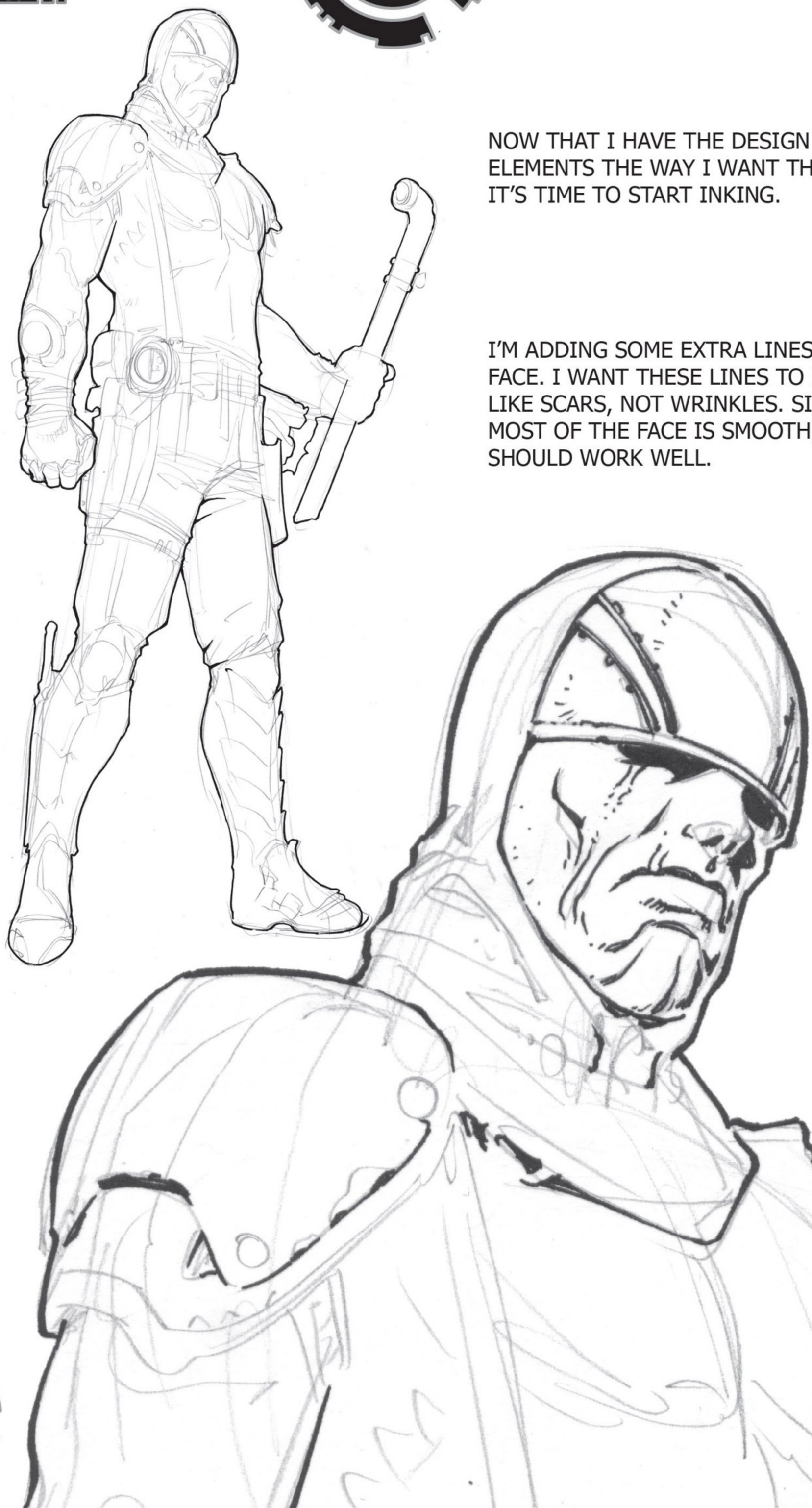
HIS HEAD IS SLIGHTLY COCKED, AS HE NEEDS TO HAVE AN ATTITUDE. YOU DON'T WANT TO MESS WITH HIM.



I WANT THIS THUG'S GEAR TO HAVE A "FOUND OBJECT" FEEL TO IT. HE TAKES WHAT HE CAN FIND AND USES IT ANY WAY HE CAN.

INDUSTRIAL DEBRIS, DAMAGED ARMOR, HIGH-END ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS...THEY ALL MAKE THEIR WAY INTO HIS ARSENAL.

THUG



NOW THAT I HAVE THE DESIGN ELEMENTS THE WAY I WANT THEM, IT'S TIME TO START INKING.

I'M ADDING SOME EXTRA LINES TO THE FACE. I WANT THESE LINES TO LOOK LIKE SCARS, NOT WRINKLES. SINCE MOST OF THE FACE IS SMOOTH, THIS SHOULD WORK WELL.

THROUGHOUT THE DRAWING, I'VE FEATHERED THE EDGES OF CERTAIN AREAS IN ORDER TO GIVE THE CHARACTER MORE VOLUME. ALL THAT'S LEFT TO DO IS FILL IN SOLID BLACK AREAS.

THUG

THUG

THE FINAL INKS. YOU CAN SEE JUST HOW MUCH THE IMAGE STARTS TO POP ONCE YOU FILL IN SOME HEAVY SHADING. YOU ALSO GET A GOOD IDEA OF THE VARIOUS MATERIALS COLLECTED HERE.

A PIRATE IS THE EMBODIMENT OF EXCITEMENT AND DANGER, WHETHER ON THE HIGH SEAS OR IN DEEP SPACE.

I'M GOING FOR A VERY CLASSIC ACTION POSE HERE. I WANT TO IMPART A SENSE OF ADVENTURE TO THIS CHARACTER THROUGH HER BODY LANGUAGE.

HERE, I'M SKETCHING IN SOME DETAILS TO HELP BETTER IDENTIFY OUR PIRATE. THE DOUBLE HOLSTERS, POUCHES, GLOVES, AND ESPECIALLY THE BOOTS WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SELLING THAT IDEA.

WITH THE FINAL INKS DOWN, IT FEELS LIKE THE DESIGN IS WORKING WELL, BUT IT JUST DOESN'T HAVE MUCH VISUAL PUNCH. I'M GOING TO CREATE SOME HEAVY BLACK AREAS TO MAKE THE CHARACTER MORE INTERESTING.

IN PLACE OF THE STANDARD LEATHER BOOTS, I DECIDED TO TRY OUT SOMETHING FAR MORE REFLECTIVE AND SHINY. FOR A FINAL TOUCH, I'VE ADDED SOME TATTOOS.

I WANT THE ALIENS REPRESENTING OUR SLAVERS TO BE AS REPULSIVE A POSSIBLE. WITH THIS DESIGN, YOU SHOULD ONLY HAVE TO TAKE ONE LOOK AT THEM AND KNOW THEY'RE EVIL.

HERE IS THE BASIC SKETCH THAT I'VE COME UP WITH. I'M GOING TO GO AHEAD AND CREATE A MORE DETAILED IMAGE TO SEE HOW FAR I CAN GO TO BETTER REALIZE THIS CHARACTER.

I START BY PAINTING IN THE BASIC SILHOUETTED FORM. I JUST WANT INDICATIONS OF THE ANATOMY AND GEAR.

NOW I PAINT IN SOME REFERENCE LINES. SINCE I HAVE A DESIGN, I'M USING THESE AS A GUIDE FOR MY PAINTING.

WITH THE GUIDES IN PLACE, I START BUILD UP THE HIGHLIGHT AREAS, FIRST WITH A BROAD BRUSH, THEN SMALLER BRUSHES AS I GO ALONG.

I GO BACK IN WITH A DARKER TONE TO PUSH BACK THE RECESSED AREAS AND MAKE THE HIGHLIGHT AREAS POP MORE.

ONCE THE BASIC TONES ARE DOWN, I START BLENDING, SMOOTHING OUT MY ROUGH BRUSH STROKES. THE PIECE IS LOOKING GOOD. I JUST NEED TO CLEAN UP SOME STRAY GUIDELINES AND ADD SOME DETAILS TO THE COLLAR THE SLAVER WEARS.

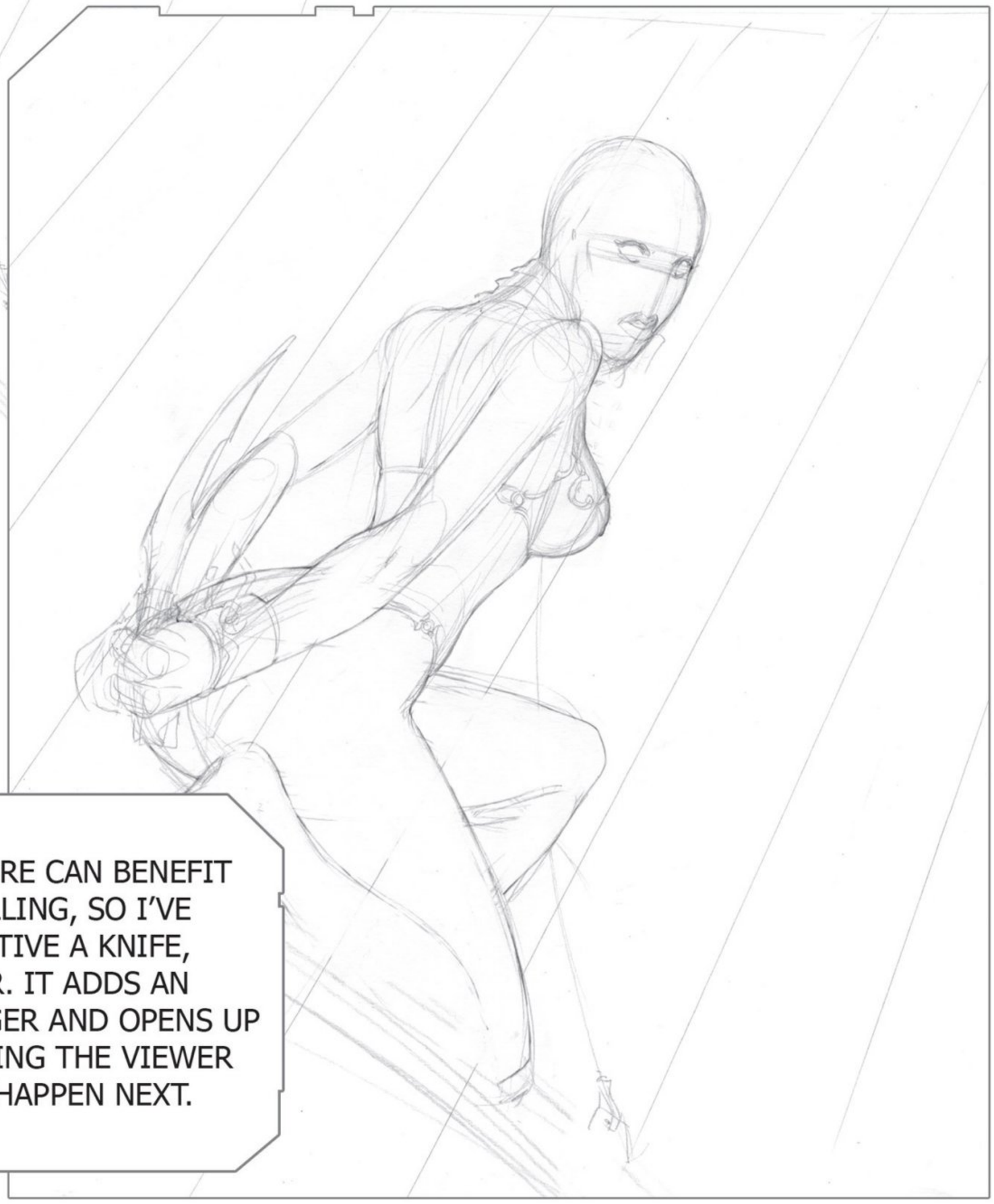
SLAVER

HERE IS THE FINAL RENDERING FOR OUR SLAVER DESIGN. I ADDED A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL ELEMENTS TO THE COLLAR, WHICH I IMAGINE IS A LIFE SUPPORT DEVICE. LET'S MOVE ON TO A FULL-BODY ILLUSTRATION.

I'VE DONE A THUMBNAIL FOR THIS PIECE. IT'S EASIER TO TEST OUT AND ARRANGE MY COMPOSITIONS THIS WAY. I'VE STAGED THE SCENE FROM A WORM'S-EYE VIEW TO MAKE THE SLAVER MORE INTIMIDATING.

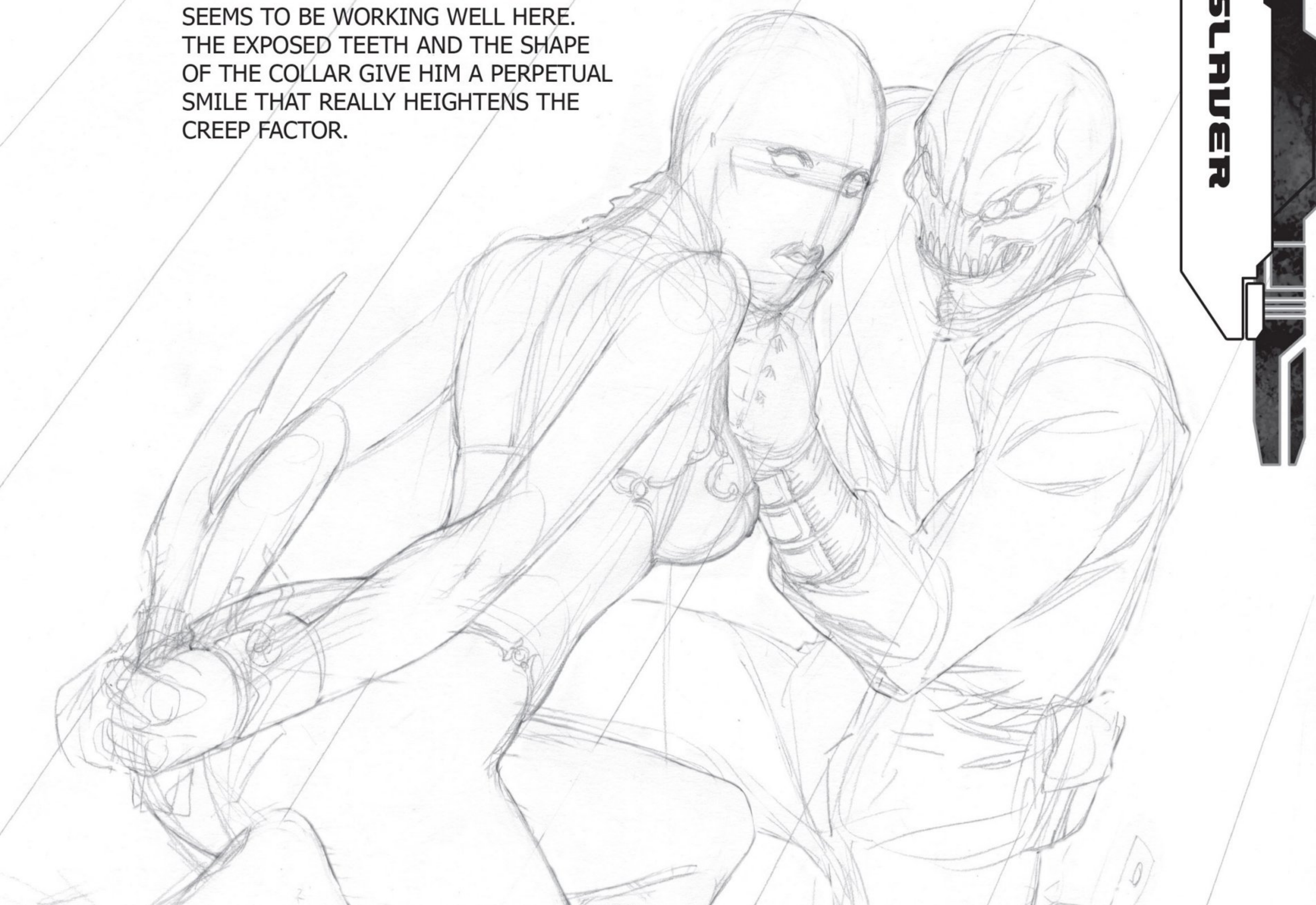
I SKETCH IN SOME GUIDELINES. THESE AREN'T MEANT TO BE PERSPECTIVE LINES, THEY'RE JUST THERE TO HELP ME NEGOTIATE THE SPACE BETTER.

ONCE I'VE CLEANED UP THE GUIDELINES WITH A RULER, I CAN START ON THE DRAWING. I'M GOING TO BEGIN WITH THE FOREGROUND FIGURE AND WORK MY WAY BACK.



I FEEL THAT EVERY PICTURE CAN BENEFIT FROM A LITTLE STORYTELLING, SO I'VE GIVEN OUR SLAVER'S CAPTIVE A KNIFE, LIFTED FROM THE SLAVER. IT ADDS AN EXTRA ELEMENT OF DANGER AND OPENS UP THE POSSIBILITIES, LEAVING THE VIEWER TO WONDER WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT.

NOW FOR OUR SLAVER. THE DESIGN SEEMS TO BE WORKING WELL HERE. THE EXPOSED TEETH AND THE SHAPE OF THE COLLAR GIVE HIM A PERPETUAL SMILE THAT REALLY HEIGHTENS THE CREEP FACTOR.

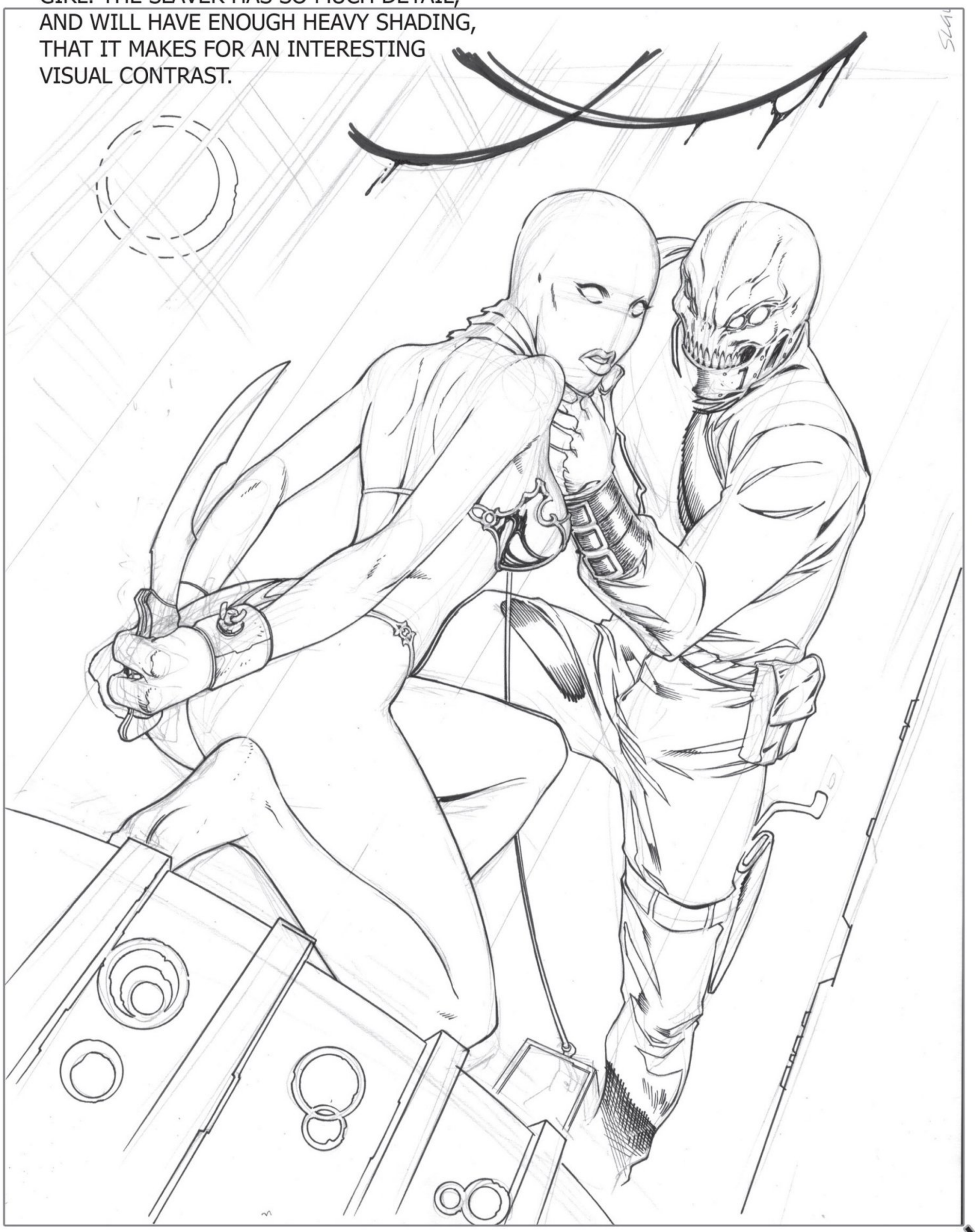


ON HIS COSTUME I'VE ADDED AN EMPTY SHEATH, MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY WITH THE STORY IDEAS I MENTIONED EARLIER.

WITH THE MAIN FIGURES PENCILLED IN, I SKETCH IN SHAPES FOR THE BACKGROUND. I'LL GO IN WITH A RULER WHEN I'M READY TO INK THESE SHAPES, BUT AN INDICATION IS ALL I NEED FOR NOW.

AS I INK THE FACES, I TRY TO ELIMINATE AS MANY STRAY LINES AS POSSIBLE. I WANT ONLY THE LINEWORK THAT BEST DESCRIBES THE FEATURES OF MY CHARACTERS.

NOW TO INK THE BODIES. I'M LEAVING MOST OF THE DETAIL OFF OF THE CAPTIVE GIRL. THE SLAVER HAS SO MUCH DETAIL, AND WILL HAVE ENOUGH HEAVY SHADING, THAT IT MAKES FOR AN INTERESTING VISUAL CONTRAST.



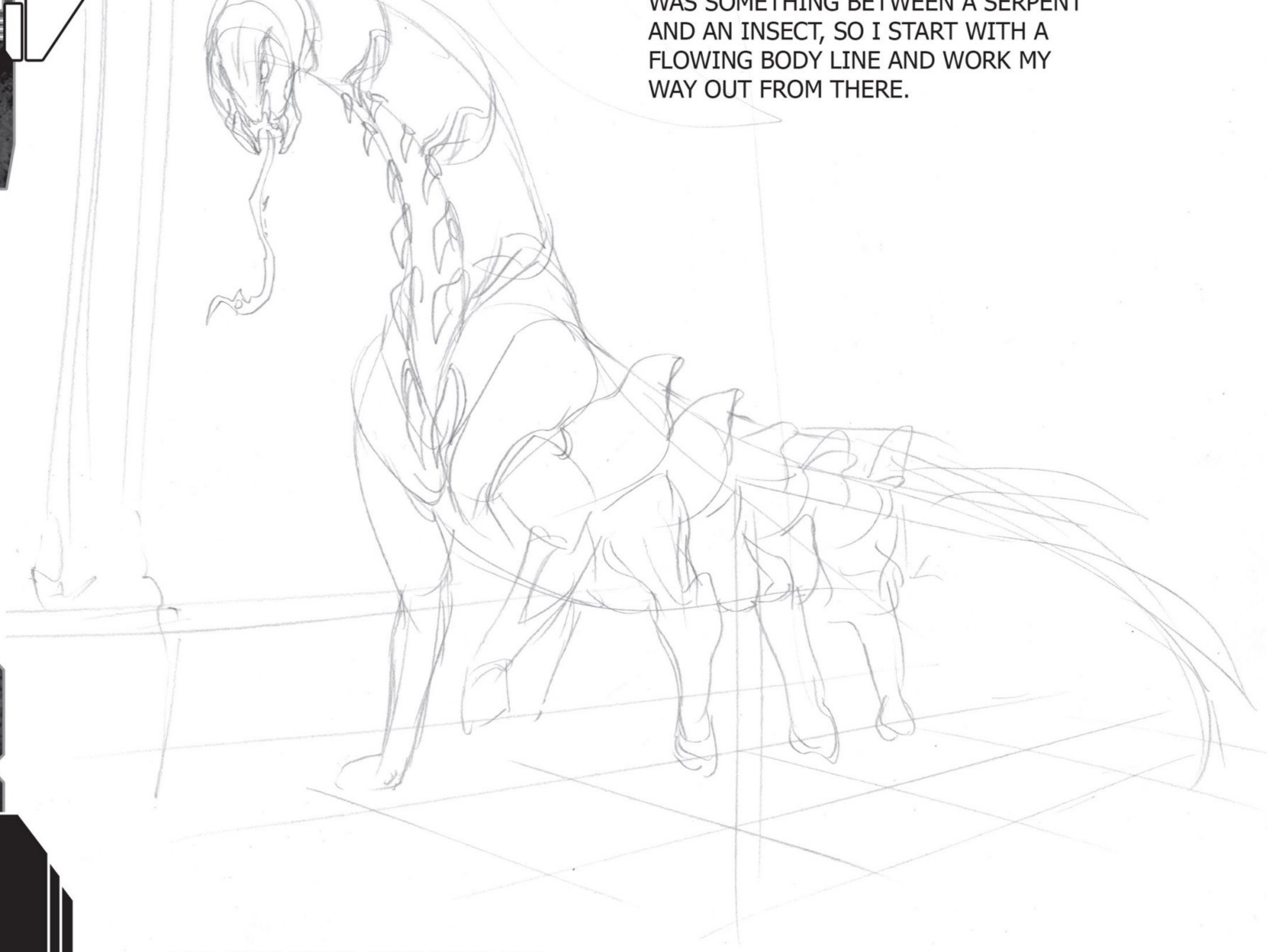
AS YOU CAN SEE IN THESE INKS, I'VE USED MARKER TO FILL THE SOLID BLACK AREAS. I PREFER A BRUSH, BUT MARKERS ARE A LITTLE QUICKER AND MORE ACCURATE IN TIGHT SPACES.

WITH INKING OUT OF THE WAY, WE'RE READY FOR TONING.

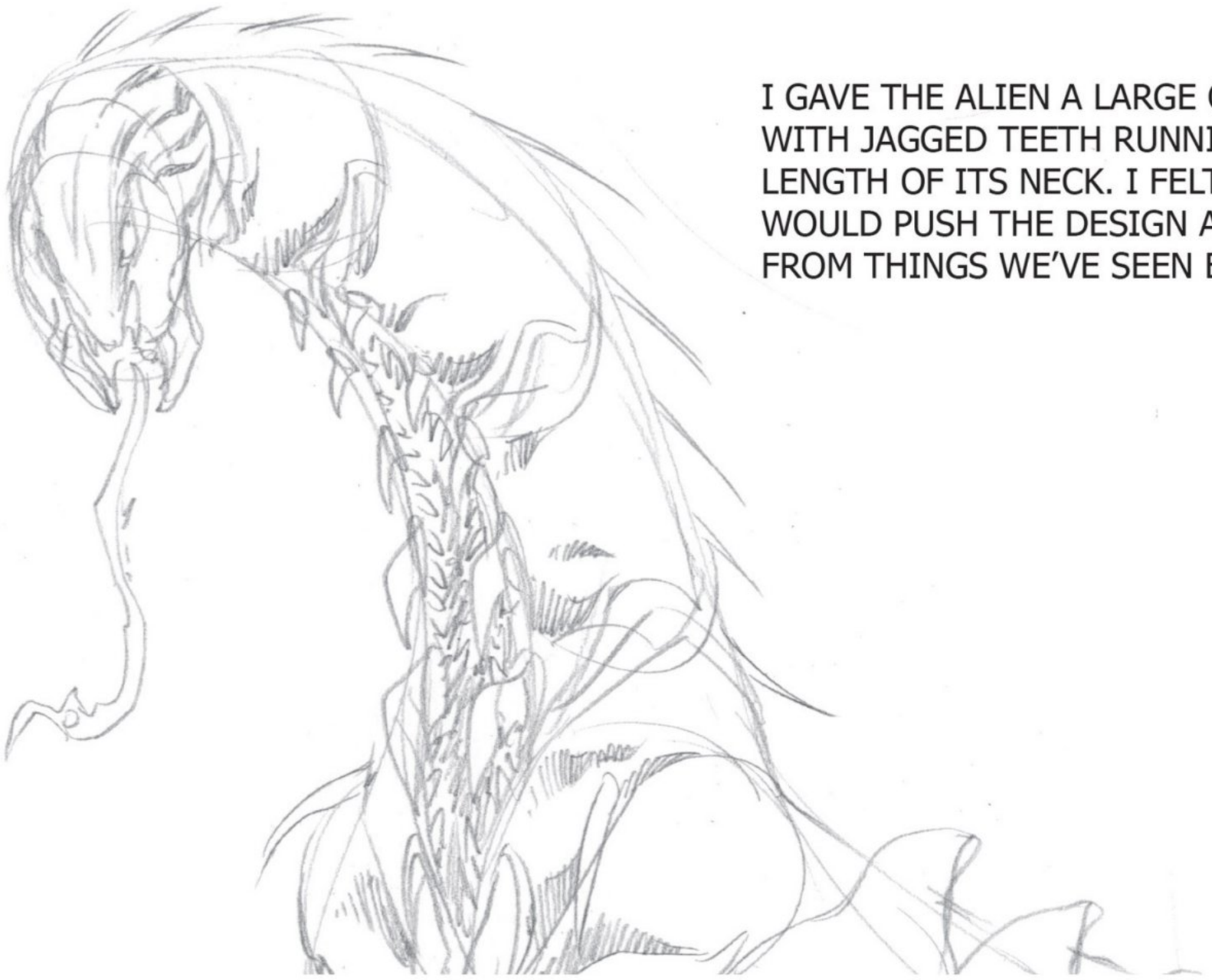
THE FINAL ILLUSTRATION. I'VE JUST ADDED SOME BASIC TONES TO PUT VOLUME INTO THE PIECE AND BETTER DESCRIBE SOME OF THE STRUCTURE IN THE FIGURES.

FOR THIS ALIEN, I WANT SOMETHING THAT'S MUCH MORE ANIMALISTIC AND DANGEROUS THAN WHAT WE'VE LOOKED AT SO FAR.

MY INITIAL IDEA FOR THIS CREATURE WAS SOMETHING BETWEEN A SERPENT AND AN INSECT, SO I START WITH A FLOWING BODY LINE AND WORK MY WAY OUT FROM THERE.

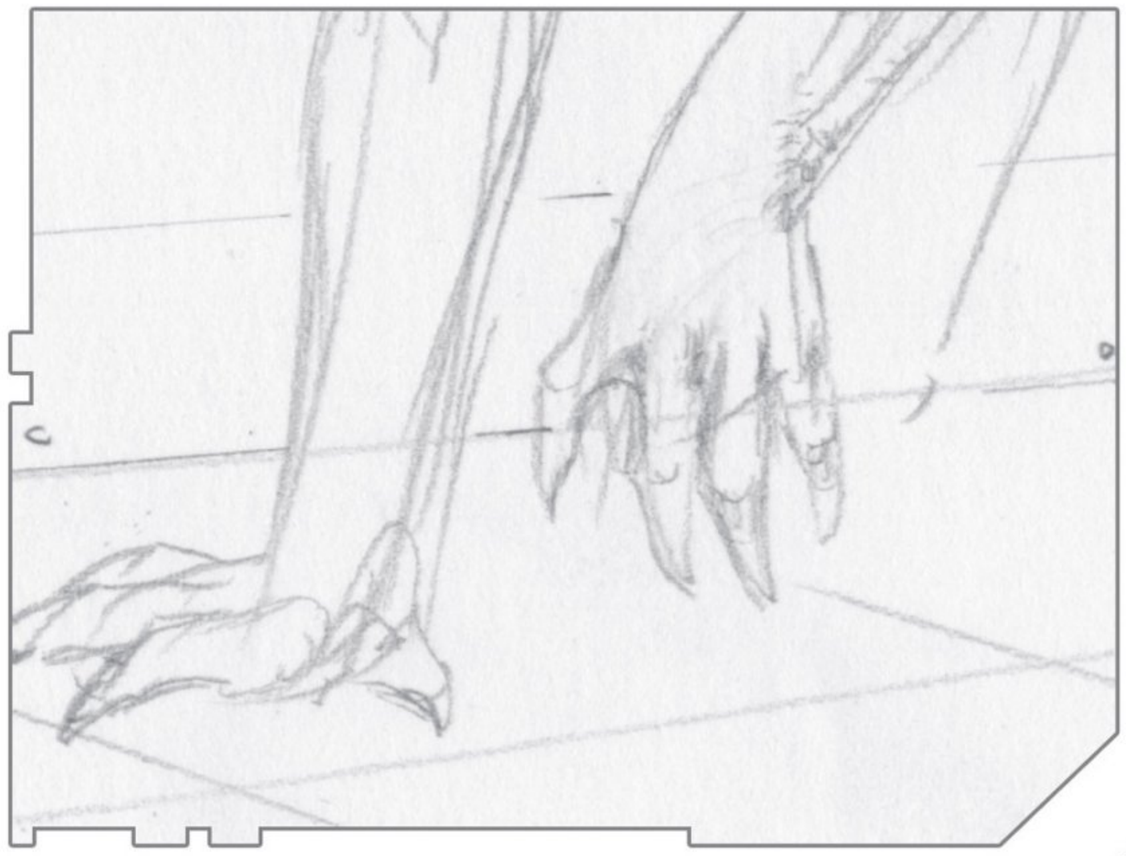


THE CREATURE'S ARMS/LEGS ARE MEANT TO RESEMBLE WHAT WE MIGHT SEE IN A CENTIPEDE.

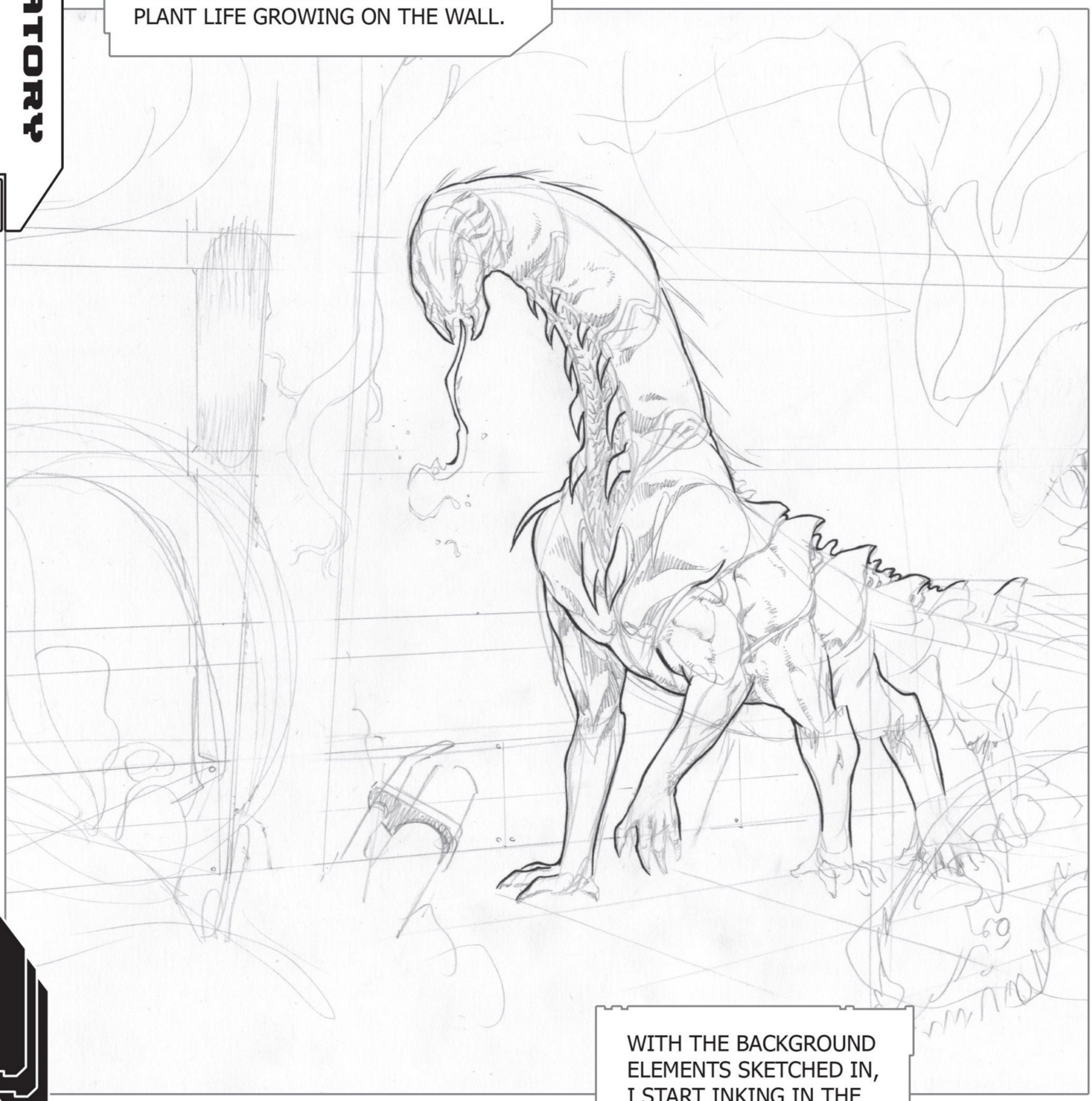


I GAVE THE ALIEN A LARGE OPENING WITH JAGGED TEETH RUNNING THE LENGTH OF ITS NECK. I FELT IT WOULD PUSH THE DESIGN AWAY FROM THINGS WE'VE SEEN BEFORE.

I ALSO GAVE THE ALIEN SOME "HANDS." ADDING DETAILS THAT SEEM ANALOGOUS TO THOSE IN HUMANS CAN MAKE THE DESIGN MORE UNNERVING THAN IT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE.



FOR THE BACKGROUND, I'M PLACING THE CREATURE IN FRONT OF A WALL, MAYBE A ROOM OR HALLWAY. THERE WILL BE SOME SORT OF STRANGE PLANT LIFE GROWING ON THE WALL.



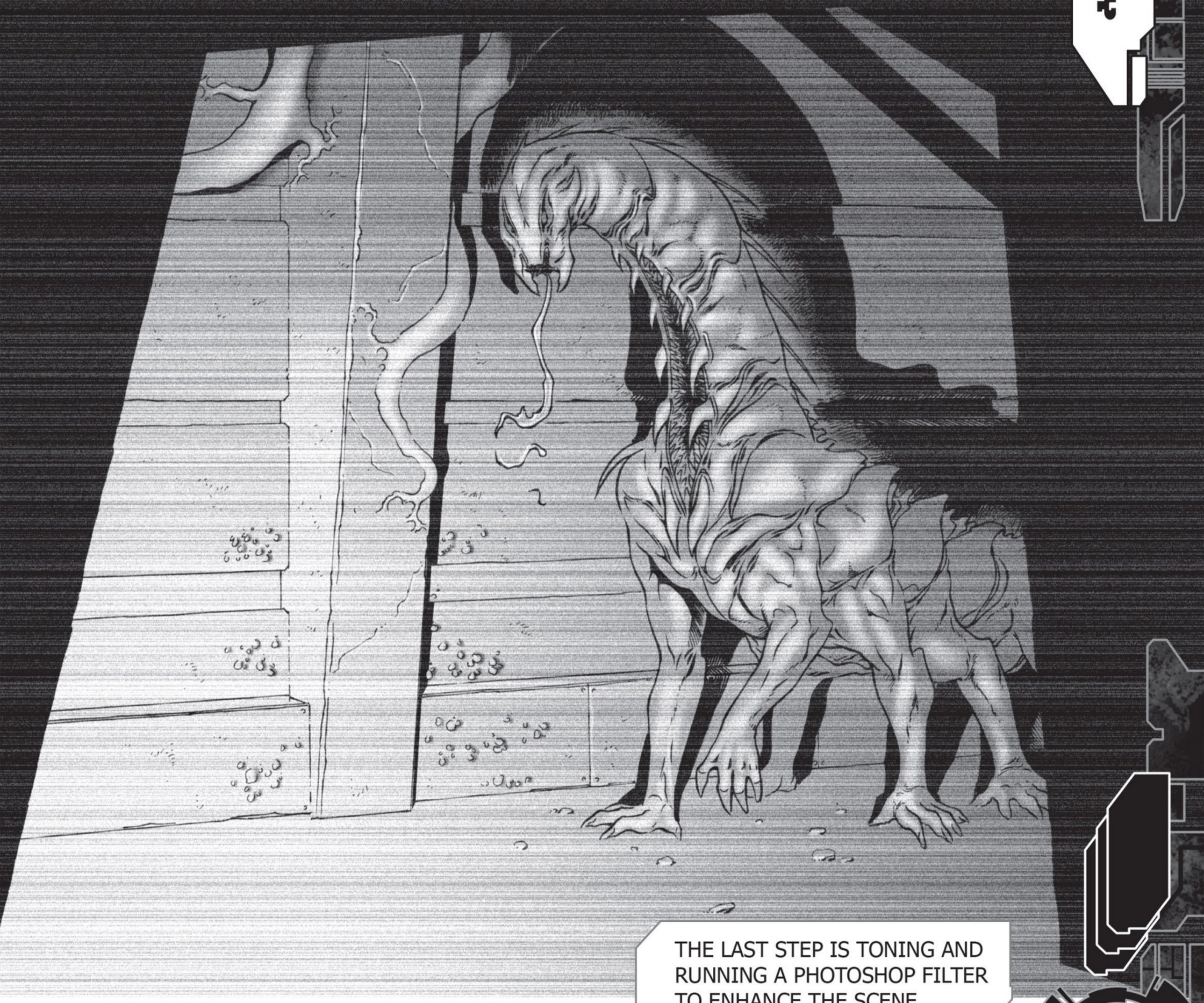
WITH THE BACKGROUND ELEMENTS SKETCHED IN, I START INKING IN THE OUTLINE.

FOR THE SEGMENTED SECTIONS, I INK IN WRINKLES TO SHOW THAT THESE SECTIONS ARE COVERED WITH A THIN MEMBRANE.

I'M USING A FINE LINE FOR THE INKING, SINCE THE CREATURE IS MEANT TO BE SOME DISTANCE AWAY.

I'M INKING IN A HEAVY SHADOW BEHIND THE ALIEN, AS IF THE SCENE IS BEING ILLUMINATED BY A HARSH LIGHT SOURCE, LIKE A FLASHLIGHT OR A BARE LIGHT BULB.

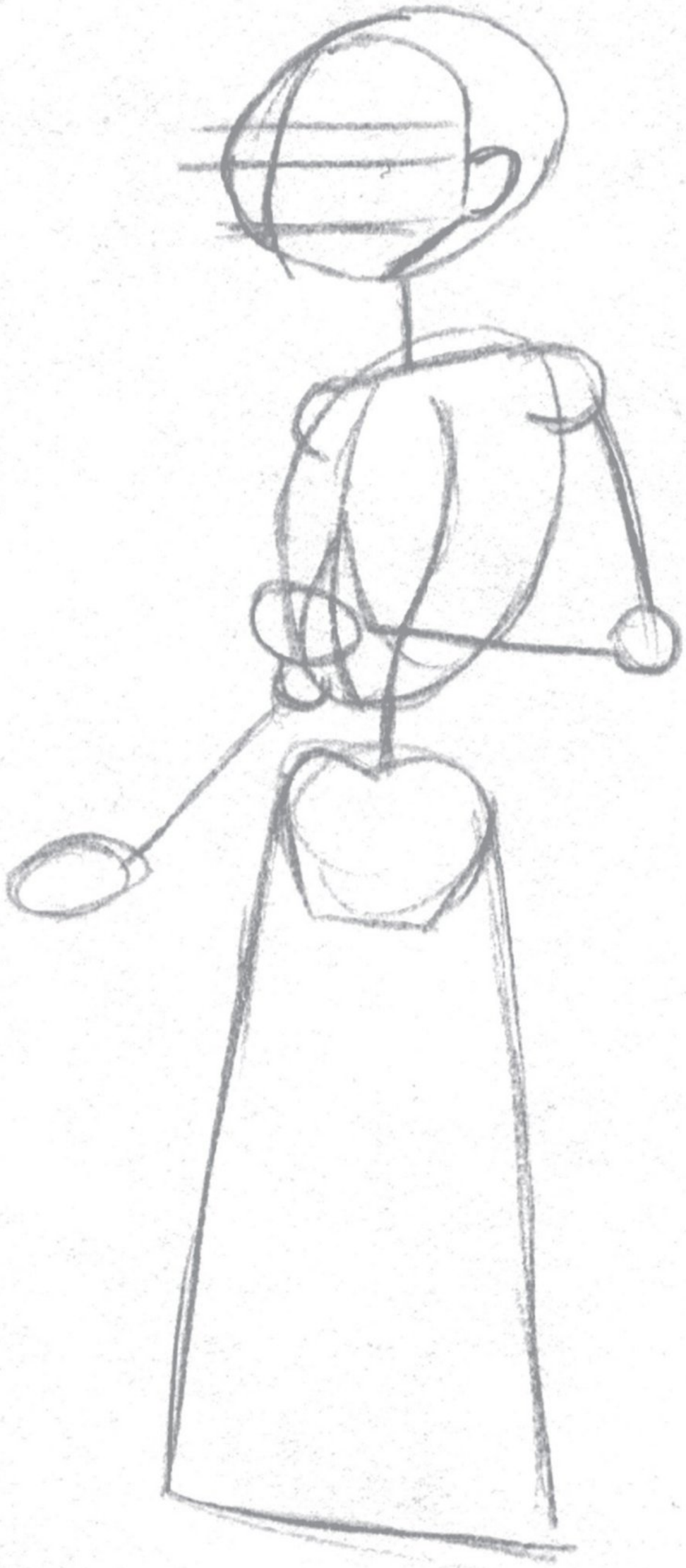
WITH THE FINAL INKS FOR THE CREATURE AND BACKGROUND DONE, I FRAME THE PICTURE WITH A SHAPE MEANT TO INDICATE A DOORWAY THROUGH WHICH THE LIGHT IS COMING.



THE LAST STEP IS TONING AND RUNNING A PHOTOSHOP FILTER TO ENHANCE THE SCENE.

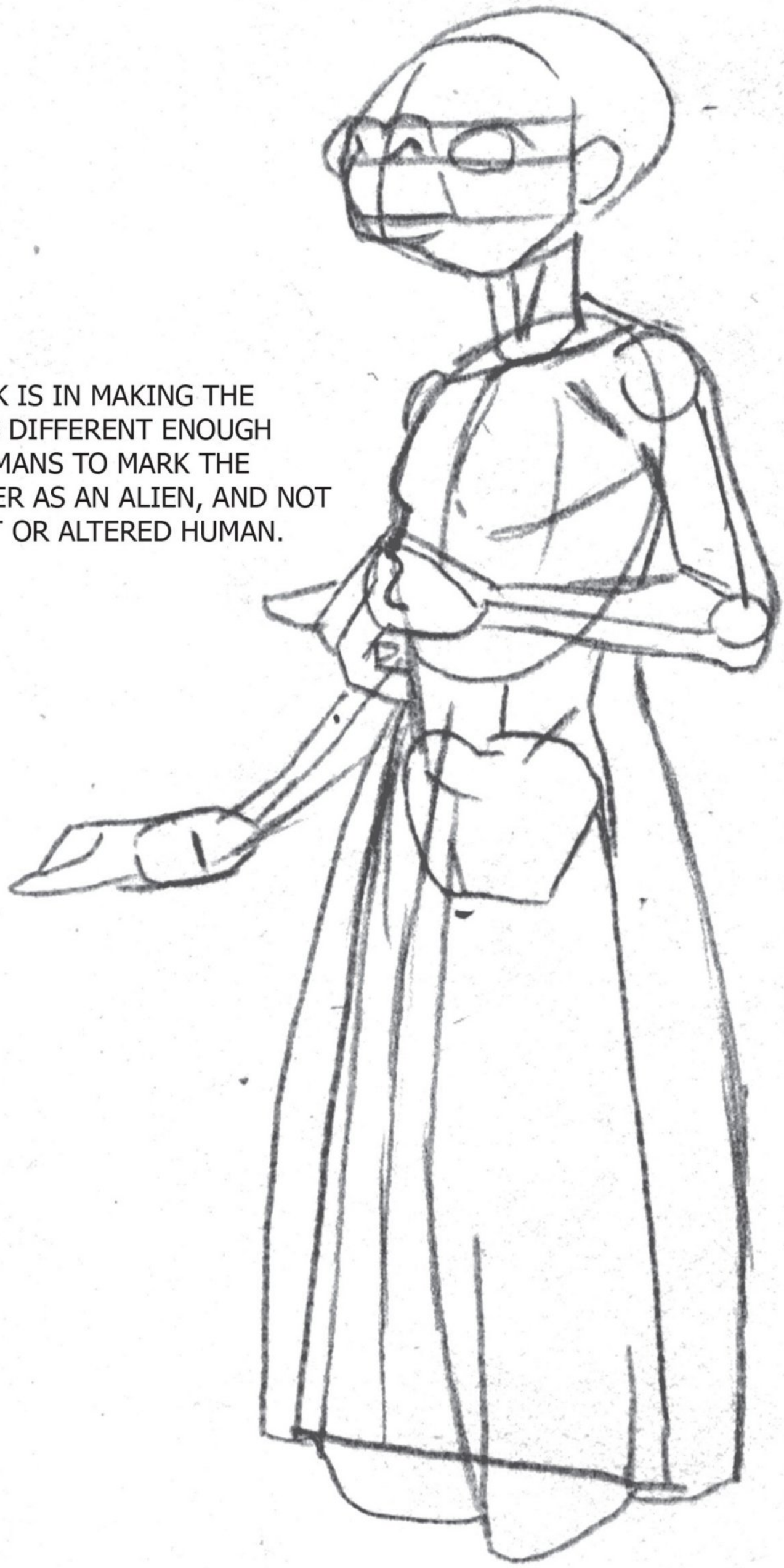
HUMANOID

ANY ALIEN WITH A STRUCTURE AND ANATOMICAL FEATURES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF HUMANS WOULD BE CONSIDERED HUMANOID. THE MAJORITY OF ALIENS ARE DESIGNED POSSESSING A HUMAN-LIKE APPEARANCE.



TYPICALLY, THESE ALIENS ARE USED BECAUSE IT IS EASIER TO READ EMOTIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE IN A HUMANOID.

THE TRICK IS IN MAKING THE FEATURES DIFFERENT ENOUGH FROM HUMANS TO MARK THE CHARACTER AS AN ALIEN, AND NOT A MUTANT OR ALTERED HUMAN.



WITH THE FACIAL LANDMARKS IN PLACE, I MOVE ON TO THE COSTUMING. I WAS AIMING FOR SOME KIND OF FUTURISTIC WIZARD'S ROBES.

NOW I CAN START SKETCHING IN THE SURFACE DETAILS. THIS IS ALSO A GOOD TIME TO SOLIDIFY THE BACKGROUND ELEMENTS.

I'M CLOSE TO A FINAL DESIGN. I'LL ELIMINATE CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT I FEEL DON'T WORK, LIKE THE MOUSTACHE. IT REMINDS ME TOO MUCH OF FU MANCHU.

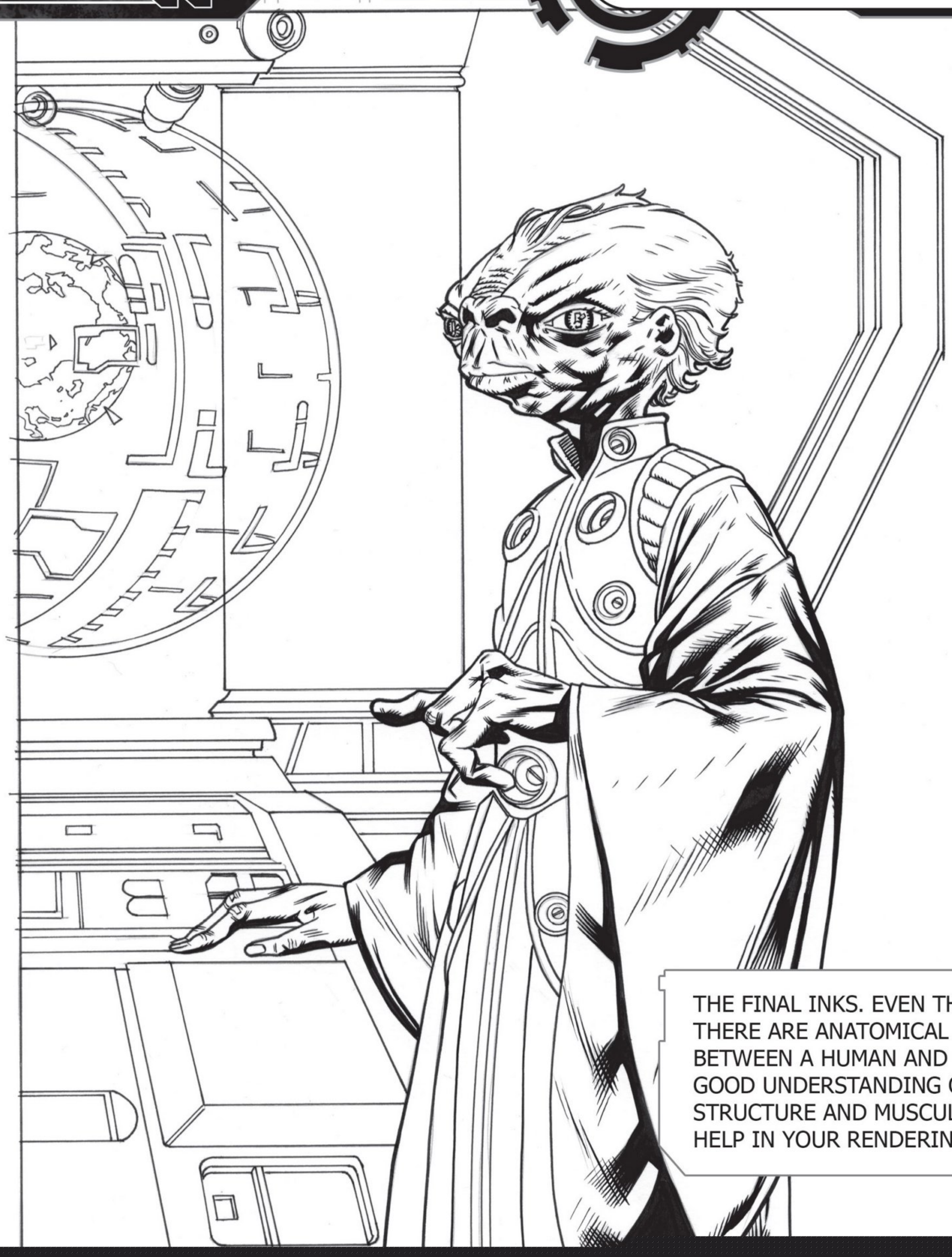
NEXT, I ENLARGE THE SKETCH AND PENCIL THE DESIGN ONTO A SHEET OF BRISTOL BOARD.

I'M USING THE SKETCH AS A GUIDE FOR MY PENCILS. NOT HAVING TO REDRAW THE DESIGN FROM SCRATCH SAVES ME A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT THAT COULD BE BETTER SPENT RENDERING THE FINAL DRAWING.

HERE ARE SOME SIDE-BY-SIDE EXAMPLES OF THE INKS FOR THIS PIECE, SHOWING SOME OF THE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED.

ALIENS

HUMANOID



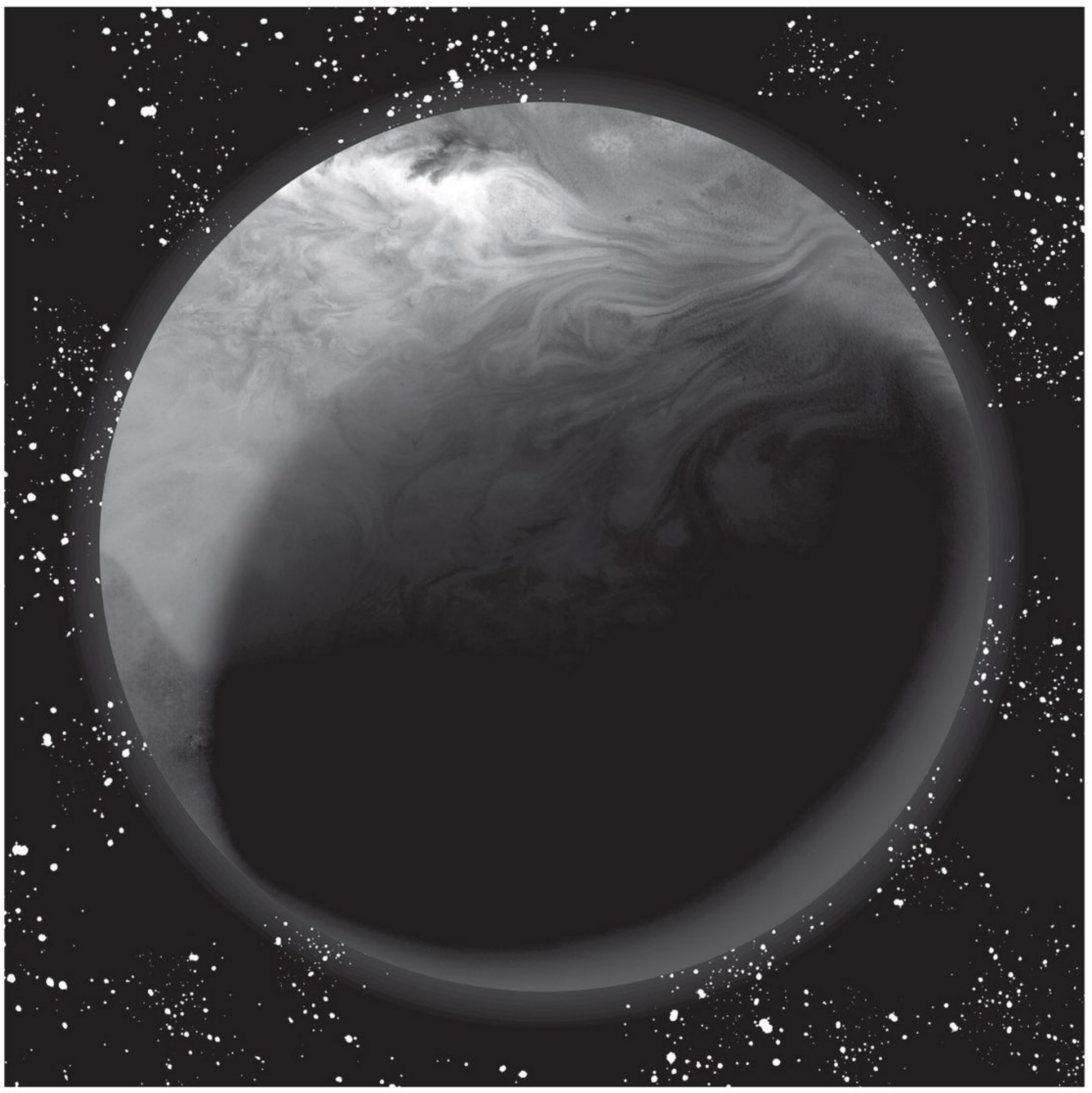
THE FINAL INKS. EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE ANATOMICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A HUMAN AND OUR ALIEN, A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF FACIAL STRUCTURE AND MUSCULATURE CAN HELP IN YOUR RENDERINGS.

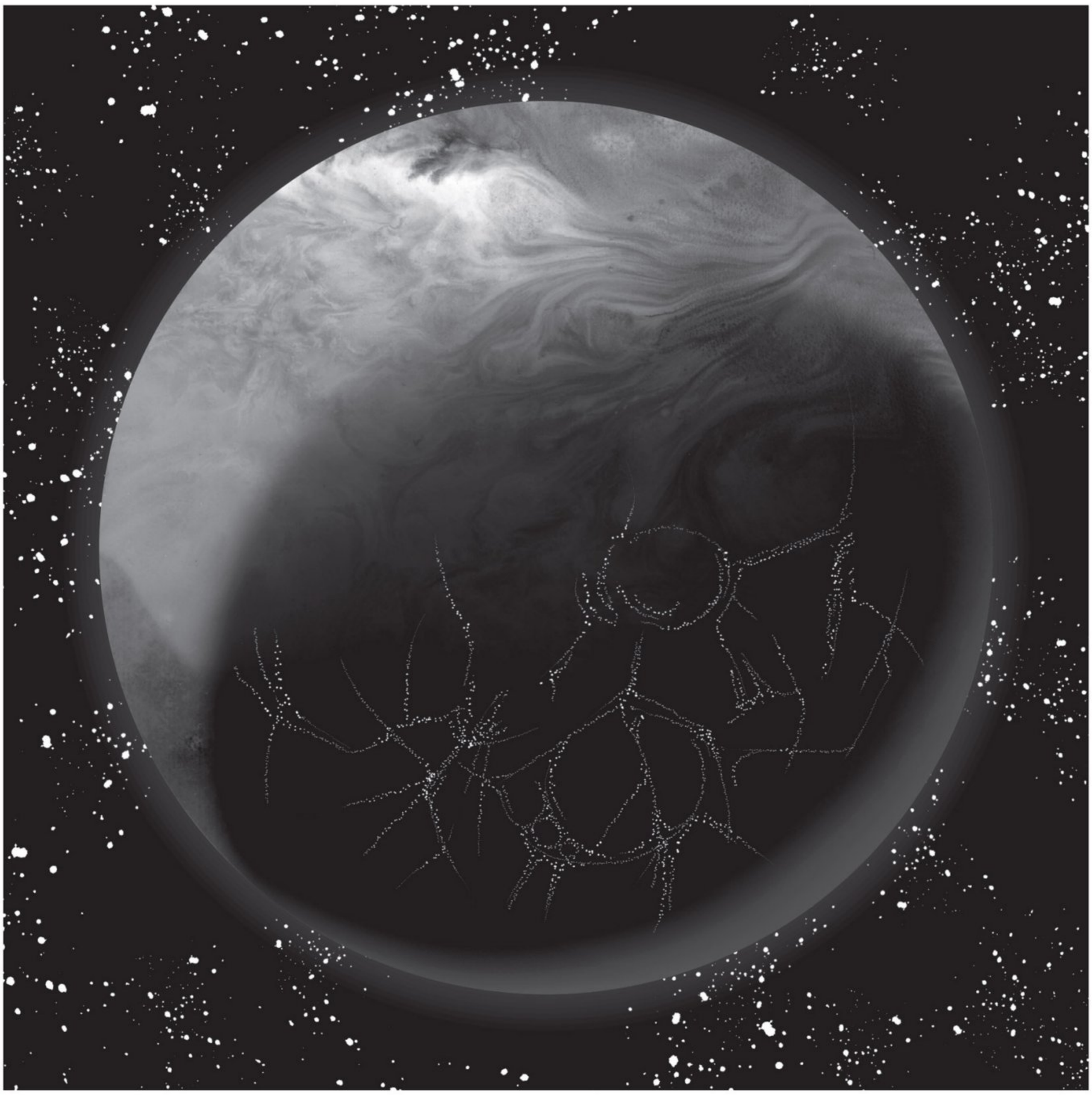
USING DIFFERENT BLENDS OF CRAYON, ANY NUMBER OF EFFECTS CAN RESULT. THEN I PICK AND CHOOSE THE ONES THAT I LIKE THE BEST.

FOR THIS EXAMPLE, I SCANNED THE MELTED CRAYONS IN AND INVERTED THE IMAGE. I THINK IT LOOKS LIKE FROZEN, ICE-COVERED PLANET.

SHADING WILL ADD A LOT OF VOLUME TO THE PLANET. BUT BE AWARE THAT A PLANET, JUST LIKE THE MOON, WILL LOOK DIFFERENT DEPENDING ON ITS POSITION RELATIVE TO ITS SUN.

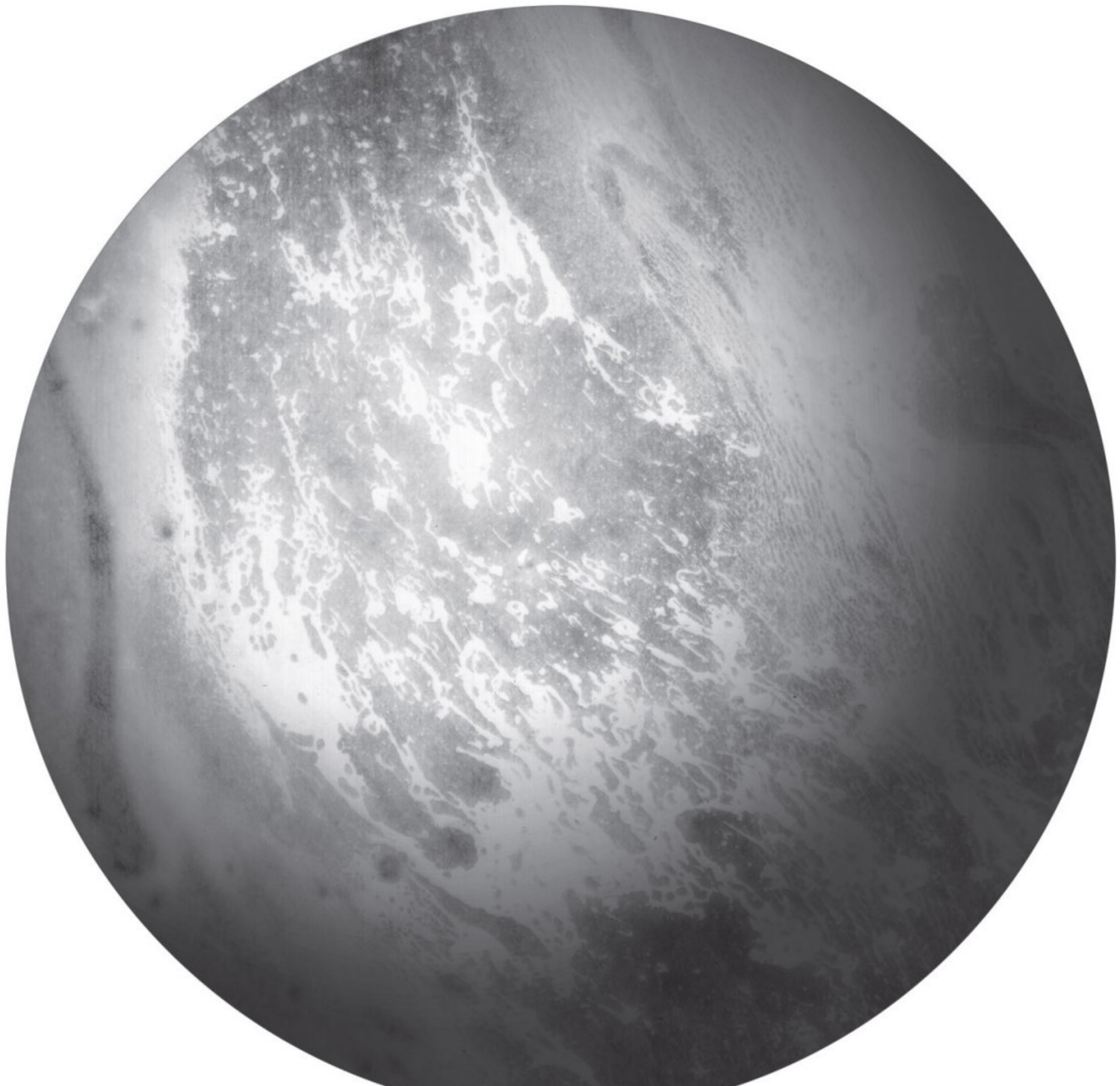
AS THE PLANET MOVES BETWEEN THE VIEWER AND THE SUN, THE MORE SHROUDED IN SHADOW IT BECOMES. YOU CAN CONSULT A CHART ON THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE MOON TO BETTER SEE WHAT I MEAN.





IN THIS EXAMPLE, I'VE ADDED A NETWORK OF LIGHTS TO THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET. IT'S SIMILAR TO WHAT YOU WOULD SEE IF YOU WERE ORBITING THE EARTH'S DARK SIDE.

FOR THE NEXT EXAMPLE, I'LL USE MY ICE PLANET.



I'LL REUSE THE SHADOW LAYER I CREATED FOR THE OTHER PLANET.

SPACE

PLANET

I HAVE ALL OF THE ELEMENTS FOR THIS PICTURE READY TO GO. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TO ASSEMBLE THEM IN LAYERS, ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER

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